

ROMANIA AND THE NEW COLD WAR SECURITY CHALLENGES

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Strategic Studies

by

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ABSTRACT

ROMANIA AND THE NEW COLD WAR SECURITY CHALLENGES, by Major Lucian Oancea, 168 pages.

The “New Cold War” refers to a revival of the political and military unrest, magnified by the modern era domains such as informational, cyber and social media with deep economic repercussions. The continuous changes in the Eastern Europe have a great influence on the Romanian security environment, raising many challenges for the decision makers. This study tried to decipher this security paradigm, unfolding the Russian economic, political and military capabilities, analyzing the Russian objectives, methods and resources allocated to implement its strategies and describing the Kremlin foreign affairs policies, revealing, in the end, the challenges answered by the most recent Romanian National Security Strategy. Whatever history will decide to name it, this emerging “New Cold War” will definitely affect the entire international community. Therefore, young and vulnerable democracies must acknowledge the fact they represent significant opportunities for the Russian leadership to create unrest and instability, challenging both the nation and the organization that is part of.

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ACRONYMS

BMD	Ballistic Missile Defense
CIS	Commonwealth of Independent States
DIME	Diplomatic, Informational, Military, and Economic
DOTMLPF	Doctrine, Organization, Training, Materiel, Leadership, Personnel, Facilities
EU	European Union
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
KGB	Komitet Gosudarstvennoi Bezopasnosti
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
US	United States
USSR	Union of Soviet Socialist Republics

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The strong do what they can. The weak suffer what they must.

—Thucydides

Problem Statement

Throughout history, the Romanian provinces of Walachia, Moldova and Transylvania were part of many alliances due to their geopolitical position between several famous empires' borders and their spheres of influence. Some of those alliances were useful while others were not. Some were benevolent and some were forced. The destiny of a small nation is always to find its own path through the major players' fog of interests, knowing that, regardless of which side that smaller country chooses, there will be pressure from all directions. This paper topic will refer to this kind of pressure.

This study will analyze how the new conflict between the West and Russia is influencing the economic, political and military domains of neighboring societies, particularly Romania. It will explore the major recent events as a means of gaining greater insight into the Russian development of policies and strategies and their intended goals. This study will also explore the development, modification, and improvement of specific measures and capabilities developed to deter Russia's destabilizing actions.

Primary Research Question

What is the current Russian strategy to influence Romania (a North Atlantic Treaty Organization member, European Union state and United States strategic partner)?

Secondary Research Questions

What are Russian Ends, Ways and Means of the foreign affairs policies employed to accomplish its strategic objectives?

What is the intensity of the Russian employment of its instruments of national power over Romania?

What is the impact of the Russian influence on the Romanian society and in particular, over the security policies?

Subordinate Research Questions

What are the major events that changed the international order and secondarily the European environment? What is the level of Russian implication into those recent events? What are the current political realities in Russia that drives these inferences? Does Russia have the economic power to sustain itself as a major world player, decisively influencing other major players? What is the present status of Russian military capabilities, doctrine and organization? What are the Russian foreign affairs goals regarding Romania in the context of the Eastern Europe volatile atmosphere? From the instruments of national power, what are the most effective tools used by the Russian leadership to impact Romanian national policies? How vulnerable was Romania to the application of those mechanisms? What are the measures adopted by the West trying to deter the Russian actions? What is the effectiveness of sanctions taken against Russia?

Background

When the world's greatest and harshest war ended, another conflict was about to start. It was a different and longer one, more expensive, less inhuman but yet very

aggressive at all levels, using all instruments of national power. Later on, history labeled that conflict “The Cold War” and defined it as a standoff between the two major powers, winners of the Second World War: The United States (US) and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR). After communism collapsed, Russia, hurt and disoriented, struggled to survive for a decade facing unprecedented internal political and economic issues. The West helped it to maintain stability but not enough to thrive, hoping to keep it weak and vulnerable.¹ Today, we have to deal with the consequences of that policy, partially because of Western indecisiveness but mostly because of new Russian ambitions since President Vladimir Putin came to power in 1999. Today’s reality is a new type of conflict, conducted with all the tools and weapons available to most important decision-makers. Some people have considered the present situation to be a continuation of the unfinished Cold War, some others named it Cold War 2.0 (because of its prevalent cyber warfare component). Most of the people prefer to call it the New Cold War, even though there are voices against such a label. Whatever history will decide to name it, this emerging “New Cold War” will definitely affect the entire international community by changing many core political, economic and military principals. There will be some important events to be played out in the international arena and economic alliances to be negotiated with different nations pursuing different interests. There will be military moves, strategic decisions, doctrine adjustments and open or hidden collisions, all of this having only one purpose: greater global influence. As part of North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and part of the European Union (EU), Romania is following its

¹ Sten Rynning, “The false promise of continental concert: Russia, the West and the necessary balance of power,” *The Royal Institute of International Affairs* (2015):1-2.

path interpreting an important regional role in a complex and volatile security environment while internally will continue to consolidate democracy, the rule of law and economic growth.

Assumptions

This study assumes that Russia will continue its neo-imperialistic policy, defined as the control of foreign and domestic policies of other nations in the name of Russian security and the pursuit of its national interests without any concern for the sovereignty, independence and legitimate national interests of its neighbors.² It also implies that Russia will persist in its attempts to dominate the former Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) states, influence EU states by profiting from the frictions and weaknesses that sometimes appear, try to prevent further NATO expansion, and seek advantageous economic agreements speculating the energy dependency of numerous states from its proximity. This study also assumes that NATO will continue to fulfil its defensive duties as it did throughout the majority of its history, with a successful transition from heavy US troops sponsored organization towards a European collective defense one, maintaining the US leading role but diminishing its troop effort.

Definition

Ambiguous warfare: is a concept used by the US and NATO military and officials to describe situations in which states or non-states entities involved in conflicts employs their forces and other resource, to achieve their military or political objectives obscuring

² Celeste A. Wallander, "Russian Transimperialism and Its Implications," *The Washington Quarterly* 30, no. 2 (2007): 108.

their direct participation, by creating confusion and deception.³ Similar with the ambiguous warfare, hybrid warfare is considered a military strategy that combines irregular warfare, conventional warfare and cyberwarfare.⁴

Eastern Europe: The study uses the United Nations (UN) Statistics Division definition of Eastern Europe, which lists the following countries as part of Eastern Europe: Belarus, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, Slovakia and Ukraine (United Nations 2009). When discussing Romania in particular, different specification can be done, also valid, such as the country is part of the Central Europe or South-East Central Europe. However, there are no political or ideological insinuations tied with this label, other than strictly geographical.

International Order: The term international order refers to a combination of laws, rules, norms, and supporting institutions that shapes and helps govern international politics and economics. The liberal international order, generally led by US after the end of World War II can be characterized as relying on international law rather than force or coercion to resolve international disputes, an emphasis on human rights, an open

³ Mary Ellen Connell and Evans Ryan, “Russia’s ‘Ambiguous Warfare’ and Implications for the U.S. Marine Corps,” *CNA Analysis and Solutions* (2015): 3.

⁴ Daniel Stefanescu, “NATO Strategy To Defeat Enemy Forces In The Hybrid War,” accessed April 22, 2017, http://www.afahc.ro/ro/afases/2015/afases_2015/air_force/Stefanescu%20Daniel.pdf.

international trading system and the treatment of the world's oceans, international airspace, outer space, and cyberspace as international commons.⁵

New Cold war: This title raised many controversies due to its past resonance and belligerent connotations. This study will use the Simon Tisdall definition of the New Cold War, presented on his article *The New Cold War: Are We Going Back to the Bad Old Days?* published in "The Guardian" as a picture of the rigid, nervous and hostile situation of present-days. The general description of this status-quo refers to a revival of the political and military unrest, magnified by the modern era domains such as informational, cyber and social media with deep economic repercussions between different powerful nations, such as the US, EU, Russia or China. Because of its numerous similarities with the original Cold War, which was a frozen ideological, political, economic and military confrontation between the West led by the US and the East led by the Soviet Union, this new dispute inherited the previous brand legacy, including the name, updated to the current reality.

Limitations

This study will be conducted without any surveys or interviews, based only on the researched literature about Russian, EU and Romanian institutions and policies. Another limitation are the unavailability of both time and money for travel for research outside this area.

⁵ Ronald O'Rourke, A Shift in the International Security Environment: Potential Implications for Defense—Issues for Congress (Washington, DC: Congressional Research Service, 2015), 1.

This study will focus on specific defense strategies released within an unclassified context referring to the European operational environment.

Delimitations

This study will confine its focus to materials published in English or Romanian language and occasionally on translated Russian documents.

The research will focus on studying the Russian institutional transformation and its influence on the region and to Romanian institutions for the last decade, concentrating the analysis on the security strategy issued by the Russian government in 2015. It will not examine the Russian influence on specific European leading nations and it will not extend to other Eastern European states in detail. The study will not make predictions and will accept the fact that there will be operational variables that might change due to the present European volatile environment, especially regarding the political approaches in the region. The reason to pursue this study resides in the importance, the actuality and the strategic generosity of this topic, a continuous presence on the top countries political leaders' offices and worldwide news channels.

Significance

Russia is identified today as one of the most significant threats not only to NATO but also to many other nations. As a whole, the aggression against Georgia and Ukraine, the information operations conducted throughout the Baltics, the frozen conflicts maintained in Moldova, Georgia, Azerbaijan and Armenia, the involvement in Turkish internal politics, its role in the Syrian conflict, the partnership with Iran and China, its policies to encourage friction and influence members inside the EU (Hungary, Greece,

Bulgaria), alleged involvement in the 2016 US Presidential elections and last, but not least, its constant threat to Poland and Romania make Russia a significant danger to regional peace and stability. The challenges has been amplified by recent decreases in US forces and capabilities in the European theater. In this context, the EU and especially the NATO Eastern flank countries must develop their defense capabilities. Therefore, Romania's political and military role in the region will consequently grow, as NATO efforts (not necessarily US) will have to increase as well. This is why it is important for the professional NATO officer to understand Russian defense and foreign affairs strategies in order to better comprehend their ways, deter their means and efficiently counter react to their ends. Only an effective leverage of the Unified Action capabilities in future operations will achieve deterrence and protect our values.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

Chapter 2 will present the literature overview, from a wide range of official documentation, materials, books and articles referring to both the past and the present. It will refer to some sources presenting the end of the Cold War, the post-war Russian evolution and the Western response to the Russian struggles. It will focus on the sources referring to the Russian influence in Romania and official documentation to support the analysis. At the same time, the analysis will be aligned with some structural strength and weaknesses of the Romanian political administration, identifying possible vulnerabilities.

In order to conduct a valid analysis about the level of influence induced by the recent Russian international approaches to Romanian security policy, this thesis must focus on official public sources, academic sources and private sector sources describing relevant aspects in regards to the Russian Strategic Ends, Means and Ways employed and the use of the instruments of national power, Diplomacy, Information, Military and Economic (DIME).

The public sector literature is the primary source of information used for this study and comprises official documentation issued by national governments (Romanian, Russian, US, NATO, EU or other countries in the Russian proximity) that have a significant relevance to the topic, such as national strategies, security strategies, military strategies and visions, released and assumed by these official institutions.

Official strategic documents constitute the perfect starting point for analyzing the Ends and the Means of Russian policies. After the end of Cold War there were a lot of changes in the security approaches adopted by the Eastern European countries and

Russia. Therefore, the security doctrine evolved in accordance with the new identified threats. This thesis will analyze the Russian official strategy released in 2015, in comparison with other similar documents released by the US or NATO and grasp the influences over the Romanian security strategy.

The Russian security strategy is the center of gravity for the Russian internal and external policies, emitting the objectives, missions, tasks, national security principles and priorities. This thesis also uses US security documents, such as 2014 Quadrennial Defense Review and 2015 European Command (EUCOM) Posture Statement, to compare different perspectives of recent action taken on both sides and how these actions reflect in official security stratagems. At the same time, the trends revealed by the Russian security strategy are generating consequences transmitted to neighboring countries, especially throughout the Eastern Europe. Romania, Estonia or Lithuania recently adopted national security documentation influenced in certain degree by the Russian political moves.

The Romanian national security strategy was adopted in 2015 for the next four years, after many internal political struggles and debates regarding the prioritization of the main security threats the country is facing. The document defines the national interests and objectives, evaluates the threats at global, Euro-Atlantic and regional level, assesses the threats, risks and vulnerabilities and provides strategical guidance for the “way ahead.” Because of the document crucial importance for national defense and foreign affairs institutions, the strategy was immediately followed by the Romanian Presidential Administration Strategic Guidance, issued in December 2015, in order to achieve unity of efforts in implementing the communicated policy.

Another important source of information for the development of this thesis are the Congressional Research Service Reports. Whether they provide accurate information about the Russian-Georgian conflict (*Striking the balance: U.S. policy and stability in Georgia*, December 2009), the Russian-Ukrainian conflict (*The shootdown of Malaysian Flight 17 and the escalating crisis in Ukraine*, July, 2014) or the current Russian-European status-quo (Statement of General Philip Breedlove, Commander U.S. Forces Europe, February 2015), these reports bring tangible facts into this thesis development process.

In the same line with the above mentioned study, Ronald O'Rourke, a specialist in naval affairs, wrote *A Shift in the International Security Environment: Potential Implications for Defense—Issues for Congress* (2015) a report that highlights the Ends, Ways and Means changes of the world order, from a unipolar system that encompasses the last three decades to a more complex triploid system with a revanchist Russia promoting ambiguity and a revolutionary and economic boosted China, using “salami-slicing strategy” throughout close vicinity.⁶ This new situation serves as a forcing function for the US to readdress its strategic policies and reshape the funding concepts, which will directly affect both NATO and EU members, especially the Eastern European countries, including Romania.

Academic sources are also valuable foundations of analysis for any scientific investigation of any subject matter because of the level of expertise employed during the

⁶ Robert Haddick, “Salami Slicing in the South China Sea,” *Foreign Policy*, accessed February 13, 2017, <http://foreignpolicy.com/2012/08/03/salami-slicing-in-the-south-china-sea/>.

research process. It consists of all the studies, reports, products, thesis and monographs published by community research institutions, study centers or any other academic establishments which work results are opened for decision-makers, scholars, specialists or simple investigators review in order to create shared understanding of various topics and a solid ground for key decisions.

The Russian strategies were the main subject for many research institutions throughout the time. Today, the topic seems to be more appealing than before due to the current Russian intentions and political trends, as a reason of concern for many nations. The Army War College study project 1704 *Analysis of Russian Strategy in Eastern Europe, an Appropriate U.S. Response and the Implications for U.S. Land power* (2015) presents a thorough picture of the Russian ways of doing business with the rest of the world, major powers or smaller nations. The study begins with the visualization of objectives of the current Russian strategic environment, the political leadership, the revised doctrine, the reorganized armed forces, the economic realities and the system's vulnerabilities. The study is significantly relevant to this thesis because is formulating a detailed analysis of the Russian military using Doctrine, Organization, Training, Materiel, Leadership, Personnel and Facilities factors (DOTMLPF), complemented with a description of the latest military operations conducted by Kremlin in the last decades.⁷ The study concludes by warning and categorizing potential future targets in the Russian proximity and the array of possible approaches from the U.S. and NATO perspective,

⁷ U.S. Army War College, Project 17013, *How the Army Runs—A senior Leader Reference Book*, Carlisle Barracks PA: Army War College, 2016, 1-2.

which greatly facilitate the extension of the topic introspection due to the Romanian NATO member status.

Furthermore, a second report addressing this topic is *Russian Political, Economic, and Security Issues and U.S. Interests* (2014) and edited by Jim Nichols—a specialist in Russian and Eurasian Affairs, who research the Russian challenges in contrast with the US interests. In the first chapters, the study provides a chronological analysis of the Russian Post-Soviet transformation and the most important reached milestones in Vladimir Putin’s plan to recreate a world power. Next, it presents an accurate image of the real Russian potential, both economic and military, underlining the issues and the problems the country is facing. The last part of the report is dedicated to the foreign affairs domain, particularly to the relations between the EU, NATO and ultimately US, with the Russian Federation. Although Romania is not seen as a primary target of the Russian exacerbated influence throughout the region, the study has a significant importance for this thesis because its focus on the impact over the Transatlantic political and military institutions, to which Romania is strongly committed.

The last, but not least, noteworthy source of data about the researched theme is Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, a world renowned academic environment that provides considerable and valuable analysis about various areas of interest, including The New Cold War, from the military perspective. The Foreign Military Study Office (FMSO) produced volumes and articles offers the readers a remarkable, in-depth investigation about the latest Russian uprising and its ominous ambitions. Timothy L. Thomas, a specialist in Russian military and foreign affairs who cooperated closely for this project with professors from the George C. Marshall European Center for Security Studies, wrote

Recasting the Red Star (2011), observing Russia's constant efforts to broaden and modernize its military tools (Means), using three standards: tradition, technology and toughness. He also contrasted the observed transformations with the realities of the Russian-Georgian war, extracting the meanings and drawing the lessons learned. Although, at the time, the author's conclusion was that Russia was not yet a major player, he stressed its progress to become, again, a legitimate military major power. However, under the auspices of the same office, after only four years and after the Russian actions in Ukraine, Syria and throughout the world political stage, Timothy L. Thomas discovered the true military objectives (Ends) of the Russian policies by focusing his research attention over the Russian military strategies in his new work, *Russia – The Military Strategy – impacting 21st century reform and geopolitics* (2015). Thomas describes Vladimir Putin personality, revealing the direct connection between Russian geopolitical goals and its leader's personal ambitions.

Thomas studies the military goals and makes the assessment that the military objectives converge towards the geopolitical ones. In the end, he perceives a greater danger for world peace because the Russians are seriously planning to create operational task forces in Brazil, Nicaragua or Cuba, able to threaten the US home territory. They could also use one of the Baltic countries to create tensions or drag a NATO member (e.g. Romania) into one of its frozen conflicts (the Moldovan province of Transdnistria).⁸

⁸ Part of Romanian territory, the province called Bessarabia was annexed by USSR at 28 June 1940 as a result of the Molotov-Ribbentrop pact, to become the Social Soviet Republic of Moldova and later, in 1991, the Republic of Moldova. Therefore, there is a certain sensitivity in Bucharest in regards with the challenges Chisinau have to face.

Therefore, this study has a substantial relevance for this thesis and for this topic in general, bringing under the scope different scenarios mentioned by several Russian military strategists, usually as warnings to the West. Furthermore, Foreign Military Study Office (FMSO) continues the research and after investigating the military Means and military Ends of the Russian policies. Dr. Lester W. Grau and Charles K. Bartles look at these matters in *The Russian Way of War – Force Structures, Tactics and Modernization of the Russian Ground Forces* (2016). This research is meant to close the gap and provide a comprehensive insight of the Russian military tactics. The military Ways will always be the most valued by the Russian decision-makers and the most threatening to the Western societies. By affording a detailed picture of the current Russian tactical level of the military, this volume enables the Russian competitors and adversaries to find the most appropriate course of action to hinder the Russian intentions and at the same time facilitates this research to identify some of the military ways already used or planned to be utilized to induce its objectives into Europeans, NATO or Romanian sphere of influence.

Besides the Foreign Military Studies Office's work, Fort Leavenworth Combines Arms Research Library (CARL) hosts a broad collection of research papers from the graduates of the Master of Military Arts and Science program as well as School of Advanced Military Studies (SAMS) monographs. The thesis "The impact on strategic stability of Ballistic Missile Defense in Eastern Europe" (2009) by Major Derek F. Schin, USAF, is presenting the potential influence of a highly debated subject as the Ballistic Missile Defense (BMD) relative to the geopolitical and strategic stability of Europe. The paper is evaluating Poland and Czech Republic, but in the end, the final locations to host

the BDM components were Poland and Romania. However, the research considerations are still valid and applicable to the Eastern Europe as a whole and to the BMD hosting nations in particular. This defense project was seen as either a provocation or a response by the two sides and will remain controversial and a source for justifying future actions, therefore its significance must find a place to be scrutinized within this paper.

The research paper “Implications of a resurgent Russian Federation for US European Command” (2011) by Major Matthew Dawson, US Department of Defense, explores the Russian revival and the security implications imposed by this fact to Western military entities such as European Command (EUCOM) and NATO, forced to find a balance between Russian partnership in Europe and the protection of the Eastern allies against the Russian aggressions. Russian assertive actions motivated Major James A. Copp, US Army, to write a thesis looking at “The Russian way of war” in order to discern the lessons the Russian Army has learned after deploying forces to three conventional combat operations, in Chechnya (1994 and 1999) and Georgia (2008). These campaigns show the progress they made and at the same time will help the military community understand these new capabilities, the strong points and the weaknesses as well.

Russian forces are also interested in developing both conventional and non-conventional areas, as Information Warfare, Hybrid Warfare or Cyber Warfare, trying to reach the full potential of these methods. A great deal of progress has been made in Information Warfare, one of the most important domains that Russian doctrine is emphasizing as an integral part of the future operational environment. Historically, Russian propaganda was always a priority for Kremlin. Currently, the Russians are

conducting an aggressive information warfare campaign against the West in particular and against any other considered threat in general. To analyze this topic, the Ulrik Franke report entitled *War by non-military means — Understanding Russian information warfare* (2015) provides a general description of how Moscow is using this tool to influence designated targets.

Hybrid warfare is another domain that will be analyzed throughout this work. Used on a large scale recently in Ukraine and previously in other conflicts that involved Russian troops, this method became one of the most preferred tools of influencing and promoting its own interests due to its large legal ambiguity. Also known as “the little green men war,” this *modus operandi* adopted by the Russian military is the subject of the publication *The little green men: Primer on Modern Russian Unconventional Warfare* (2015) published by the US Army Special Operations Command (SOCOM). This work provides an in-depth description of Russian hybrid warfare historical employment, between 1991 and 2014 along with a detailed analysis of the Ukrainian hybrid conflict both on Crimea and Eastern border.

The same topic is also dissected by the Center for Naval Analysis (CNA)’ study *Russia’s “Ambiguous Warfare” and Implications for the U.S. Marine Corps* (2015) written by Mary Ellen Connell and Ryan Evans. The authors define “ambiguous warfare” starting with the analysis of the Gerasimov doctrine, describing the way that Russian army is employing the doctrine into the recent conflicts on the Ukrainian territory and way this approach will change the operational environment in the near future.⁹ Although

⁹ The Chief of the Russian General Staff, Gen. Valery Gerasimov published on 26 February 2013, the article “The Value of Science Is in the Foresight: New Challenges

the study was addressed initially to the US Marine Corps military, the insights provided by the analysis are useful to any military organization willing to learn about the challenges raised by this combination of conventional and unconventional tactics.

The military is the main tool that Russian politicians can employ but it is not the only one. Many factors of influence are presented in the various reports of the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS). This thesis will delve into several works produced by this research center, the most important being *The Kremlin playbook—Understanding Russian influence in Central and Eastern Europe* (2016), a project developed by a group of specialists coordinated by two directors, Heather A. Conley and Ruslan Stefanov. This study provides meaningful information to this thesis about different political approaches supported by economic policies, especially in the energy domain, doubled with high level corruption and manipulation as part of the Russian government arsenal. Basically, they are presenting The New Cold War waged with other than military Means and Ways, to achieve the same Ends.

The economy is a permanent concern of the Russian governments. The study *New Energy, New Geopolitics—Balancing Stability and Leverage* (2014) is a valuable work of three authors, Sarah O. Ladislaw, Maren Leed and Molly A. Walton about the geopolitical impacts of energy policy to date, the rebalance caused by shale gas and tight oil productions and the future of energy policies from both the major producers perspective (Russia, Saudi Arabia, Iran, Iraq, Mexico) and major consumers (EU, China,

Demand Rethinking the Forms and Methods of Carrying out Combat Operations” in Voenno-Promyshlennyy Kurier (Military-Industrial Courier). Before the breakout of Maidan events, he presented a new vision to conduct a combination of conventional and non-military operations to accomplish military objectives and achieve political success.

Japan). The study introduces US interests and policies into the equation but what is really important for this thesis is the comprehensive approach of the energy issues that EU is facing and how this affects its coherence in formulating and applying coherent position in security matters. As part of EU puzzle, Romania has its role in this energy calculation and it is driven by its energy status due to its available resources.

In-depth analysis for this thesis continued with the exploration of other research center products. In November 2015, a group of researchers from the Center for Naval Analysis (Vera Zakem, Paul Saunders, and Daniel Antoun, with contributions by Dmitry Gorenburg and Michael Markowitz) published a study meant to fill a gap in the common exploration of the Russian influence toolbox: *Mobilizing Compatriots: Russia's Strategy, Tactics, and Influence in the Former Soviet Union* (2015). This work is about the use of Russian minorities in the former USSR states as a policy *raison d'être* to create pressure and unrest throughout the target countries. This goal is not an easy one to be achieved and the Russian Federation had to engage significant of effort using this influence mechanism while generally its foreign affairs doctrine is predominantly defensive. Romania is not a former Soviet republic, nor is it a Russian-speaking nation and not a nation with a Russian minority. However, Romania is a country sensitive to the situation of its neighboring states, in particular to the former Soviet Republic of Moldova, which possess a certain level of vulnerability to this type of influence.

Stretching and Exploiting Thresholds for High-Order War (2016) is another book making a clear picture of how Russia, China, and Iran are eroding American influence using time-tested measures short of war. Conducted by RAND Arroyo Center, part of the

RAND Corporation, this center is a federally funded research and development center sponsored by the US Army to provide useful data to predict future challenges.

At the same time, in the private sector there are interesting opinions of talented authors describing different aspects and effects of today's political decisions throughout the Euro-Asian area, based on detailed research, leadership intentions and perceptions and/or personal experiences. One of these authors is Armand Gosu, a Romanian writer advocating the need to create a Romanian Eurasian Research Center as a source of advice and expertise for the local decision-makers when coherent reactions are needed in this complicated operational environment. In his latest book *Euro-Falia*, he provides an interesting interpretation of the relations between Russia and its neighbors and the Romanian role and positions adopted in several cases like Ukraine, Moldova or Syria. This book is a collection of Eastern European studies written under the pressure of the latest events that have marked a significant turnover in the world order, events known as the New Cold War.

The quality and quantity of consulted literature for this work provides a wide range of expertise, from renowned research organizations, written or edited by worldwide-appreciated authors. There is a balanced representation of the sources originating from both Eastern and Western hemispheres, with documentation issued from public institutions or published by private entities or individuals and a rich spectrum of knowledge from public to private domains in order to support the framework applied for this study and to validate the results of the analysis.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This chapter provides a presentation of the thesis qualitative research methodology, based on the deep exploration of the benefits, advantages and disadvantages of utilizing meta-research and in-depth analysis during the investigation process of the chosen topic.

After the iteration of the purpose of the thesis, the research process will begin with the literature review in order to portray an accurate overview of the current situation instigated by the recent event and action conducted by the Russian Federation.

The thesis will apply a combination of recent historical records research and pattern analysis based on the realities of the current strategical and operational environment. The main method employed during the thesis development is document analysis and notes review combined with latest news reports to portray the status of investigations. The exploration technique used for this thesis will be the library research, based on an intensive analytic review of existing literature applying standard criteria in order to maintain objectivity and to grasp the most important aspects of the subject. Content analysis and text interpretation will complement the research results. In addition, the author will use cognitive mapping and limited qualitative data to identify existing patterns and to justify the validity of the overall analysis.

In the first part, the study will focus on the description of the Russian political, economic and military importance on the international arena and on the Eastern European region, using multiple frameworks to complete the assessment. The DOTMLPF analytical tool will examine the current Russian military capabilities. The Ends-Ways-

Means correlation will be used to portray the Russian way of implementing its foreign affair policies. On the second part, the thesis will concentrate on the evolution of the Russian security strategy up to 2015 and will highlight the influences and the consequences inflicted to similar policies in Romania and some of the surrounding countries, using the DIME framework. The literature review established the validity and suitability of the sources used for this investigation.

In the analysis chapters of the thesis, the author will outline the main events that have significantly changed the strategical environment in the last decade. Starting with the Georgian-Russian war overlapping the deepest economic crises since 1933 that the West had to face, continuing with the Russian aggression against Ukraine (Crimea's illegal annexation and the hybrid actions in the Eastern part of the country) at the same time with the NATO struggle to reach an enforced enclosure of the Middle East conflicts, the ongoing Syrian Civil War, the tensions inflicted by the several migration waves, the Turkish failed *coup d'état*, The Brexit and the U.S. latest elections result, all these events have continuously shaped the Russian actions and ambitions and ultimately influenced the European security environment, especially in Romania and other nations in the region.

Furthermore, the methodology will analyze the Russian strategic goals and interests within the context of its desired sway in the world. The author will conduct a limited introspection of the contemporary, recent, post-Soviet Russian history to discover the roots and to describe the so called "road to war," the path that created the conditions for the emergence of this new discord labeled the New Cold War, closely tied with the rise of Vladimir Putin as part of the current challenge. The recent history will set the

background for today's political, economic and military situation in the Russian society as a whole. The author will conduct a detailed examination on the military component utilizing DOTMLPF assessment to construct an accurate outlook the existing Russian armed forces capabilities. The overall intention is to correctly describe the true Russian potential and how is the Russian leadership employing this potential to gain strategical advantages when engaging in political, economic or military disputes, especially relative to Romania.

Moreover, the methodology will continue to explore the subject by transferring the analysis of the recent events and action that caused the tensions between the Russians and the West, in order to decipher the Russian foreign affairs policy. The investigation will continue with similar analysis of the most important aspects of Russian National Security Strategy by focusing on its ends, ways, means and especially the risks involved. To achieve this objective, the author will combine the results of the research of governmental documents with different studies, projects and works published in U.S. and Romania, matching different objectives with different created or generated effects throughout the region, emphasizing the impact of those influences, particularly in Bucharest.

Next, based on the Russian goals, the bold moves and its constant pressure on the NATO edge, this study will entail a detailed look at the challenges Romania has to face in such highly volatile security environment. The author focal point will be the Russian exploitation of its instruments of national power (DIME) over the Romanian society and how this pressure determines political and security decisions on short, mid or long term.

The main instrument to promoting these political decisions throughout the region and the world is Diplomacy, a domain where the Russian expertise was tested and retested over the years, especially during the Cold War era, to become eventually more and more skillful and significantly more efficient. This thesis will provide an overview of the Romanian-Russian diplomatic relations in the framework of US, EU and NATO Romanian partnerships.

Economy was turned over in the last decades of the Russian transformation. From a major weakness incapable to provide the necessary resources to increase local productivity and better living standards, to a true weapon used in a ruthless energy war against different “opportunity targets” like ambiguous business partners or unsure proximity friends. The author will concentrate on the Economic relations between the two countries, identifying any vulnerabilities that could influence top level decisions.

Information is one of the most important domain of any Russian security strategy, a mandatory milestone to achieve strategic objectives. As a heritage of the famous Russian propaganda, this area is skillfully managed by different Russian institution and entities, using a wide range of entities, resources and techniques to manipulate, shape environment and influence decisions and actions. This study will pinpoint the most common procedures used in Romania, detecting the targets, the goals and the generated effects.

Military is maybe the most powerful tool in the Russian political toolbox. Recently reorganized, this factor is successfully used to promote instability in many regions in the Russian proximity. With a completely reshaped doctrine, employing a mixture of conventional and non-conventional capabilities, the military really paid-off the

latest Russian investments. Without having a direct physical presence in Romania, its menacing shadow engenders uncertainty along the entire NATO Eastern flank, from Kaliningrad to Donbas, from Odessa and Sevastopol to Tiraspol.

The thesis will end the analysis by drawing the conclusions, categorizing the information and extracting meaningful data. Further on, the deductions about the Russian influence on the Romanian national security strategy will be compared with similar lines of effort employed by the Russian organizations in the region in order to emphasize patterns and identify particularities. Moreover, due to the objective analysis of several untranslated Romanian security documents, strategies, policies and research papers, both public and private, this study adds an important amount of knowledge and value to this topic. In the future, various decision-makers can transformed the results of this study into eloquent recommendation to be considered prior of different policies implementation.

CHAPTER 4

THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION STATUS, CAPABILITIES AND SIGNIFICANCE

Changes in the Strategic Environment

There is an existing feeling in the world that everything our parents used to know has either changed or is changing. The year 2016 only, produced several historical moments, true shifts from the international order. After the 2016 U.S. Presidential elections, America seems to change its foreign policy from a global comprehensive approach towards a mercantile, nationalistic attitude.¹⁰ The Brexit shook the E.U. political establishment and everybody is waiting for the economic wave of repercussions. Turkey political leadership survived the military coup and started a purge against its armed forces leadership. Currently, Turkey (one of the most important NATO members) is conducting intensively offensive operations in Syria in cooperation with Russia, and is trying to reinforce the presidential powers by changing the Constitution. Although history has a permanent repetitive tendency, every time the flavor is different, more interesting, less predictable, but always fascinating.

There are many factors to initiate, influence and implement the change but there are a few aspects that will never be obsolete when it comes to international order and the process of change. The history is always repeating. The leading nations and the followers will always coexist while in the same time, there will always be rising nations

¹⁰ Thomas Wright Fellow, “The Foreign Crises Awaiting Trump—Presidents don’t get to choose their emergencies,” *The Atlantic*, accessed January 26, 2017, <https://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2017/01/trump-russia-putin-north-korea-putin/513749/>.

challenging the leaders. The economics will always be an indicator, a factor, and a trigger for the challenging states to initiate disputes. At the end of the day, all these aspects have an input in shaping the strategic environment, defined as the overall result of the competition, the cooperation, and the technologies and military equipment the world's major players possess at a certain time.¹¹

After the Cold War, the world transitioned from a bipolar power system to a unipolar one, having the US as the sole, unchallenged leader of the international order.¹² This situation created many challenges, forcing the U.S. to adapt its political, economic and security approaches, procedures, and organizations. After almost two decades, this status suddenly changed. The 2007 trade and industry crises bursting into the Western society created an economic tactical break in the development process, favoring emergent markets like Chinese, Brazilian or Turkish producers to flourish. In the same time, the energy permanent rising prices truly favored nations with significant reserves like Russia, to raise their revenues and benefit important gains. During the following year, topping up the economic crises, the U.S. confronted the Russian aggression against Georgia after only four months in its nomination to join NATO. In the same year, the U.S. would lose the Olympics Games to the Chinese. This event was a great propaganda opportunity, presented as the victory of the successful new communist society over the decadent Western civilization.¹³

¹¹ O'Rourke, 4.

¹² Ibid., 1.

¹³ Ibid., 4.

This moment generated the true shift in the world order towards the New Cold War, a multipolar situation with the U.S., the E.U., China and Russia as the future major players to influence the near future of the strategic environment. Along with them, there are some other regional powers to complete the multipolar picture of the future. This portrait is characterized by the beginning of the second nuclear age, access to new military technologies, and a new dynamics of the military structure evolution.¹⁴

The second nuclear age began sooner than human kind expected. After the end of the Cold War, general opinion was that these capabilities were impossible to use. However, since the assets became available to other nations besides the U.S., Russia or China, the risks considerably increased. Today there are multiple examples of countries possessing nuclear capabilities: Great Britain, France, India, Pakistan, North Korea, and Israel. It is the responsibility of the major players to align the foreign policy of those nations and contain their actions in order to preserve peace. Along with the nuclear arsenal, these countries developed many military capabilities once available only to the rich states, like drones, sophisticated missile systems or cyber capacities. They also have been constantly working to modernize and adapt their military structures, making them more robust, more proficient, and more convincing at the negotiation table.¹⁵ The future strategic environment will be molded by the major powers ability to lead and control their sphere of influence when mitigating worldwide momentous historical events.

¹⁴ Paul Bracken, "Coming to Grips With a Strategic Shift," *Real Clear Defense*, accessed January 10, 2017, http://www.realcleardefense.com/articles/2017/01/06/coming_to_grips_with_a_strategic_shift_110588.html?utm_source=RealClearDefense+Morning+Recon&utm_campaign=111d61e55c.

¹⁵ Ibid.

For Romania, the strategic background shapes around its connection with Western organizations. After the Communism collapsed, Romania started the long journey of Western reintegration after four decades of collectivism by reforming its internal structures, constructing a new society driven by the rule of law and democracy. In 1994, Romania was the first country to adhere to the Partnership for Peace program, in 2002 received the official invitation to join NATO and in 2004 obtained the membership. In July 1997 it signed *The Strategic Partnership with U.S.A.* and updated it with *The U.S. and Romania Common Declaration—A Strategic Partnership for XXI Century* on 13 September 2011.¹⁶ In 2007, after long and painful economic reforms, Romania became a member of the E.U. In this context, the E.U. and the U.S. are the strategic partners with the most important contribution on Romanian internal and external policies. As a result, the country is very sensitive to their decisions and interactions with other major players. As an example, in the present days, the aggressive Russian actions influence security strategies around the entire border area between East and West, threatening NATO security and EU stability, while the Chinese are trying to control and restrict freedom of flight and navigation in South China Sea. In this context, the Romanian decision-makers are interested not only on their partners decisions, but on the actions of other nations, capable to impact policies at the higher levels.

¹⁶ Minister of Foreign Affairs, “US-Romania Strategic Partnership,” accessed January 14, 2017, <http://www.mae.ro/node/4944>.

U.S. Policies

With a new administration and a new Commander-in-Chief installed in the beginning of the year 2017, the U.S. prepares to face one of the most difficult foreign policy periods, due to an expected reset of the international order. The revanchist Russia, the strategic and economic rise of China, the constant threat of violent Jihadi movements and rogue states actions as Iran and North Korea makes the uncertainty to expand to an intimidating level. Lack of rules on domains like the cyber sphere and outer space, increase the overall complexity of the situation.¹⁷

There were mainly two phases during the post-Cold War period. The first one, the domination phase, began right after the end of the first Gulf War and lasted the entire mandate of President Bill Clinton. The second phase was violently initiated by the 9/11 attack and identified a new threat to the world leader, known as terrorism. War on terror marked the U.S. evolution for more than a decade, setting the nation on a path of consecutive catastrophic successes.¹⁸ According to this theory, the victories achieved in asymmetric confrontations with less competitive armies like the Iraqis and the Afghans, created a myth of invincibility within the U.S. Armed Forces and drove its attention away of the conventional approaches in combating a classical, near-peer military.

¹⁷ Eliot Cohen, "Discussing 'The Big Stick: The Limits of Soft Power and the Necessity of Military Force,'" *The Cipher Brief*, accessed January 10, 2017, <https://www.thecipherbrief.com/column/state-play/discussing-big-stick-limits-soft-power-and-necessity-military-force-1521>.

¹⁸ Thomas Barnett, "Let's rethink America's military strategy," accessed January 11, 2017, http://www.ted.com/talks/thomas_barnett_draws_a_new_map_for_peace.

This situation changed especially after January 2012 when the U.S. strategic guidance documents announced a major rebalance, shifting its focus from the European theater to Asia-Pacific, modifying the majority of the ongoing plans and programs. For the U.S, the main objective was to maintain free and unimpeded access to Eurasian region, where the majority of resources are located and the greatest trading activity is taking place. Therefore, the emergence of a hegemon like China in this region, threatening the freedom of trading around South China Sea area, is at least alarming and requires immediate actions.¹⁹

The rebalance had important consequences in Europe, where the U.S. military presence in 2015 reduced to 65000 soldiers, at the lowest level since the end of Second World War.²⁰ Therefore, when Russia become more and more aggressive, new security measures had to be imposed to strengthen the old, traditional strategic alliance of the Western civilizations (European and Northern American). Maintaining this alliance is vital not only for the Americans interests, but for the European unity as well. NATO accepted more responsibilities regarding defense initiatives and an increasing number of members decided to rise their defense budgets to two percent of the G.D.P. In July 2014, the U.S. Congress allocated one billion dollars to European Reinsurance Initiative to reinforce NATO and U.S. presence in Eastern Europe.²¹ Later, the Wales NATO summit

¹⁹ O'Rourke, 6.

²⁰ U.S. Congress, *Statement of General Philip Breedlove, Commander U.S. Forces Europe, EUCOM Posture*, House Armed Services Committee, Washington DC, February 2015, 3.

²¹ O'Rourke, 9.

decided for a permanent NATO presence in Poland and the Baltic, as well as in the Black Sea proximity.²²

Finally, in the economy, the level of uncertainty is constantly growing. Oil, gas, and renewable energy markets are facing extreme instability due to the ongoing changes in the strategic environment. Traditional economic alliances and partners are shifting orientation. With a new administration in 2017, many of these uncertainties also originate from the questions raised by the newly elected President Donald Trump about the ambiguous future policies on energy, production, and trade.

EU Transformation

The EU is not yet an actor state on the international stage. It is a union of states founded on four basic freedoms, created to bring economic prosperity for its members: the free movement of goods, capital, services, and people. All decisions are made by consensus between all member states because each state sovereignty is a basic pillar in this design construct. However, this format requires a lot of time to coordinate collective concepts and actions, and most important, requires many compromises regarding common definitions of interests, values and norms. The complexity of the European history, the cultural diversity within its borders, and the different stages of progress of the states, determined the politic and security domains to have a dawdling evolution comparing the economic one.

Nevertheless, even the E.U. economy was hardly challenged during the recent economic crisis that hit North America and Europe in the last decade. The first cracks of

²² U.S. Congress, Statement of General Philip Breedlove, 5.

the establishment appeared during the many debates and negotiations that took place to regulate fiscal policies across E.U. The decision to limit each member national deficit per year to three percent of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) did not create much enthusiasm among the member states. This moment demonstrated the necessity of a tougher approach and increase coercion from Brussels to reinforce, sometimes, not very popular, but necessary policies. It is not a smooth process; some states, like Greece, Portugal or Spain protested and opposed initially the imposed measures. Other states are trying to coagulate the interests by artificially created groups inside E.U., like Poland, Hungary, Czech Republic and Slovakia (together known as the Visegrad group), to obtain a position of advantage in different negotiation processes. Great Britain, influenced by a strong current of populism, decided to leave the Union. However, if the E.U. wants to address successfully the new challenges, it has to maintain the course of transformation to create a homogeneous entity with real, strong, coherent instruments of power. Economy is not enough; Diplomacy, Information and Military tools are required to leverage effectively the economic potential and to rely less on the transatlantic partnership.²³

The economic challenge showed the path to solve issues, a combination of increase powers for the Union institutions and national compromises for the greater, collective purpose. Today, the E.U. has to face complex, more diversified security dilemmas, and the transformation process is highly required in multiple domains. In the East, an aggressive Russia threatens the international order. In the south, waves of

²³ Deutsche Welle News, “Merkel: No 'eternal guarantee' for United States cooperation with EU,” accessed January 13, 2017 <http://www.dw.com/en/merkel-no-eternal-guarantee-for-united-states-cooperation-with-eu/a-37115220>.

migrants assault the European borders, running from poverty or conflicts in the search for a better life. Throughout the entire territory, especially in the West, the shadow of terrorism and radicalism expands day by day.²⁴ Internally, after the British exit from the Union, the future elections in the Netherlands, France and Germany have a special, if not crucial importance. More than ever, the E.U. must be united and act coherently in order to provide the security its citizens and its partners expect.²⁵ The priorities of the European security policies and the common vision were laid out on the Global Security Strategy adopted in June 2016. Same document, for the first time is stressing not only the need for a soft power approach but for a hard power component as well, different than NATO, capable to deliver a military response when required to deter high risk situations.²⁶ Previously, in 2013, based on the Lisbon Treaty the E.U. adopted the Comprehensive Approach Policy to coordinate external actions, but the emphasis was more on prevention and long-term commitment to crisis resolutions rather than immediate protection actions and building security capabilities.²⁷ If this transformation process continues unimpeded

²⁴ U.S. Congress, Statement of General Philip Breedlove, 4.

²⁵ High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, “Shared Vision, Common Action: A Stronger Europe—A Global Strategy for the European Union’s Foreign and Security Policy,” accessed January 15, 2017, http://eeas.europa.eu/archives/docs/top_stories/pdf/eugs_review_web.pdf, 7.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 9.

²⁷ High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, “Joint Communication to the European Parliament and the Council-The EU's comprehensive approach to external conflict and crises,” accessed January 15, 2017, http://www.eeas.europa.eu/archives/docs/statements/docs/2013/131211_03_en.pdf, 1.

by internal or external disturbances, the E.U. will become more consistent, more effective, and more strategically visible among world majors players.

China Rising

Although far from the European arena, Chinese actions have an increase relevance for the entire world economic, trading and defense agenda. Romania's security policies must be in accordance with the actions of its partners or its predicted threats. As they recently become more and more assertive, China's behavior had and will have second and third order effects on all the others major players' actions on the international stage. First, Romania was affected because China's general attitude on trading and its actions on the international waters determined the US to shift their attention from the European theater. Secondly, once the West implemented the deterrence actions and economic sanctions against Russia, China tried to leverage this economic opportunity by trying to extend cooperation with Russia especially in the energy domain, diminishing the effectiveness of those measures. Thirdly, China's support to North Korea influenced the hurried development of the BDM system in Romania, as part of the precautionary measures taken against a presumed North Korean attack.

By redirecting U.S. attention towards the Pacific, China indirectly facilitated the Russian actions in Europe, primarily in Ukraine, but also in Moldova, the Baltics, Greece or even Hungary. However, this was not a sudden act, nor intentional. Since the beginning of the century, China has been consistently consolidating its economy. For many years, it was the perfect business partner for every nation willing to trade. Cheap labor and available resources provided China with a great advantage over other competitors on the markets, the high rate of productivity, which factor determined many

companies to invest intensively. As a result, the Chinese economy grew constantly allowing the leaders from Beijing to expand their sphere of influence economically and militarily, raising legally unacceptable claims in South China Sea area.

Starting in 2008, the Chinese authorities started an ideological competition with the West, primarily with the U.S. They started to promote on the government-controlled media, recent or historical events about possible victimization and humiliation of the Chinese people, to obtain the public support for the future actions.²⁸ On 23 November 2013, China declared unilaterally Air Defense Identification Zone (ADIZ) in the East China Sea without considering any of the heavily involved nations in the Asia-Pacific trading activities.²⁹ Ignoring the protests of the U.S., Japan, Korea, Australia, Indonesia, Malaysia or the Philippines, China continued to build up its artificial islands in order to impede freedom of flight or navigation on international airspace or waters. This was one of the reasons to determine the U.S. to rebalance its resources and policies from Europe to Asia, along with Chinese government efforts to modernize its military forces, especially the submarine fleet.³⁰

In this setting, the relations China was building with its Northern neighbor became significant for the West and by consequence, to Romania as well, since the Russian economic containment decreased. The first signs of this friendship were visible when the two countries decided to abstain from the U.N. resolution regarding the Libyan

²⁸ O'Rourke, 1-2.

²⁹ Ibid., 27-31.

³⁰ Ibid., 11.

problem. Since then, both have constantly voted against a resolution for a military intervention in Syria.³¹ That means China is playing the friendship card, trying to benefit as much as possible. It will include not only relatively cheap energy but also some concessions about border issues.³² Ian Bremmer stated in his article *New Cold War on Business* (2014) that Moscow is burning bridges with the West and building pipelines with China.³³ As they have a long common border and some common goals (both are facing U.S. containment strategies and neither trust the West), they have recently agreed on a \$400 billion contract to support a new gas deal. Furthermore, China received an invitation to invest in the Siberian Vankor project.³⁴ However, along that border are living approximately six million people on the Russian side and roughly forty million on the Chinese side. In this situation, it is difficult for the Chinese to accept a border drawn by the tsarist Russia in the early 1800s on some territories that once belonged to the Chinese emperors.³⁵

Finally, China's support for the rogue regime of North Korea had also a positive side effect in Bucharest because it helped the BDM Aegis Ashore system to develop

³¹ Jacob W. Kipp, "Smart' Defense From New Threats: Future War From a Russian Perspective: Back to the Future After the War on Terror," *Journal of Slavic Military Studies* (2014): 26.

³² Lilei Song, "The Ukraine Crisis: a Multidimensional Analysis in China," *Eastern Journal of European Studies* (2015): 14.

³³ Ian Bremmer, "The New Cold War On Business," *Fortune Vol. 170* (2014): 3.

³⁴ Song, 13.

³⁵ Zbigniew Brzezinski, "How To Address Strategic Insecurity In A Turbulent Age," *Huffington Post* (2017).

without major delays. Perceived by the Russian government as a direct threat, the project was finished in May 2016.³⁶ According to NATO and Bucharest officials, it is only a defensive capability, meant to discourage any North Korean, Iranian or any other nation missile attacks, since there are 30 countries around the world developing these capabilities.³⁷

The evolution, or devolution, of relationship between China and U.S., China and Russia or China and E.U., will continue to have a crucial impact over the economies and the security environment of smaller countries, like Romania.

Russian Involvement in Recent Events and Their Lessons

Besides the Western and Eastern major players interacting on the international strategic arena, the Caucasus region struggles and Middle East convulsions have a specific relevance for the Romanian decision makers.

In April 2008, at the NATO summit held in Bucharest, just a few weeks after Kosovo independence recognition by the U.S. and its Western allies, Georgia was not offered a Membership Action Plan (M.A.P.) but received solid promises from the U.S.

³⁶ Victor Cosmei and Raluca Pantazi, “Infografic. Scutul anti-racheta devine operational,” *Hot News*, accessed January 26, 2017, <http://www.hotnews.ro/stiri-esential-20989217-infografic-scutul-antiracheta-deveselu-devine-operational-joi-cum-functioneaza-care-sunt-costurile-care-sunt-cele-mai-importante-reactii-pana-acum-ale-rusiei.htm>.

³⁷ North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), “NATO: Defending against Ballistic Missile Attack—NATO Secretary General Anders Fogh Rasmussen Speech at the Royal United Services Institute,” accessed January 26, 2017, http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/opinions_75473.htm.

President George W. Bush to join the North Atlantic organization in the near future.³⁸ Infuriated by the Western resolve for the Serbian separatist province and encouraged by NATO hesitation, a few months later, Russia started the five days war against the small Caucasus country, a bold strategic maneuver that surprised not only Georgian society, but the Western powers as well. It was the moment that Russian unspotted recovery revealed to the entire world. After the conflict, the Russians recognized the separatist provinces of South Ossetia and Abkhazia, and in the following month, they tried to persuade their partners from Shanghai Cooperation Organization (S.C.O.) or Collective Security Treaty Organization (C.S.T.O.) to do the same. Their efforts were unsuccessful, only Nauru, Nicaragua, and Venezuela decided to recognize the self-proclaimed independence.³⁹

After the conflict, the U.S. and international community decided to help the Georgian government to rebuild the economic infrastructure and the military through economic commitments comprising 4.5 billion dollars, the U.S. contributing with 1 billion.⁴⁰ However, strategically the West did not have a comprehensive answer, the Obama Administration announced a US-Russia reset of political relations that discouraged the Georgian authorities, and the Western European countries continued the economic and security projects. Even the Eastern European countries had different

³⁸ North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), “Bucharest Summit Declaration, 3 April 2008, point 23,” accessed March 12, 2017, http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/official_texts_8443.htm.

³⁹ U.S. Congress, *Striking the Balance: U.S. Policy and Stability in Georgia*, Committee on Foreign Relations United States Senate, 111 Cong., 1st Sess., December 2009, 3.

⁴⁰ Ibid., 1-3.

approaches, Romania, Poland, the Baltics strongly condemned the aggression, Hungary, Slovakia, Slovenia, and the Czech Republic adopted moderate positions while Bulgaria was rather neutral.⁴¹

In January 2011, when the Georgian conflict implications were far from resolved, the world confronted another crisis, the Syrian protests. Starting as a movement against the Allawi regime of Bashar Al-Assad, the riots transformed soon into a civil war due to the authorities' violent response and other internal and external aspects.

At the intersection of profound political and strategic trends that extends across the Middle East, Syria is facing some critical fault lines run across the country. First, there is a collapse of the social balance between the government, perceived to be the oppressor and the society. Secondly, Syria is a victim of the intensified clashes over regional dominance between Iran and its neighboring Arab states, primarily Saudi Arabia. Thirdly, the increasing Sunni-Shia rivalry, mainly felt in Iraq and Lebanon, is beginning to mark Syria as well. Fourthly, there is a continuous rise of political Islamism throughout the region and repercussions are spreading. Finally, the balance between ethnic groups within the multiethnic Levantine societies tends to find a position of equilibrium.⁴² Moreover, on top of those factors, the major players considered Syria an opportunity to implement their own vision regarding the solution for the country. The U.S. constantly supported the opposition movement based on the democratic principles of

⁴¹ Janusz Bugajski, "Georgian Lesson—Conflicting Russian and Western Interests in the Wider Europe," *Center for Strategic and International Studies* (2010): 59.

⁴² Emile Hokayem, *Syria's uprising and the fracturing of the Levant* (London: Routledge Publishing, 2013), 11-21, 192-206.

individual freedom and the right to self-governance of the Syrian people. Russia decided to support the regime in power to maintain its influence on the Syrian policies. This will allow its troops to maintain their location on Tartus Russian base, obtained 45 years ago. Additionally, they intend to open a second base in Jablah, the southern part of Latakia province to increase operations. Between 20 of August and 7 of September 2015, five Russian ships crossed the Bosphorus strait, filled with military equipment from the 27th Motorized Brigade Novorossiisk and the 810th Marines Brigade Sevastopol. To achieve these objectives, the Russian government deployed S-400 surface-to-air cruise missiles at the Khmeimim base, the Admiral Kusnetzov carrier, Moskva battleship and other at least five navy ships, 5000 soldiers, special forces and paratroops from the 7th Mountain Division and more than 70 aircraft.⁴³ In October 2015, the offensive operations against the rebels' forces were successful and the communication with Aleppo city was re-established. Besides the antagonist U.S. and Russian interest, Turkey got involved in the civil war because of the security threats raised by the chaotic migration waves and the Kurdish population actions. This aspect led to the impossible situation to regain its national unity, at least on short and midterm, because of the external opposing influences, the social divide, the lack of local cohesion and the intransigent approach of the Assad's regime. In March 2016, the Russian troops announced withdrawal from Syria and in December 2016, the Russians led the peace negotiations in Astana, the capital of Kazakhstan. To be successful, the diplomatic solution must engage and reconcile the views of players at global (US-Russia), regional (Iran, Turkey, Saudi Arabia) and local

⁴³ Armand Gosu, *Euro-Falia*, (Bucharest: Curtea Veche Publishing, 2016), 254-266.

(Assad's regime, rebels, ISIL) levels. For that reason, Syria was the Russian greatest alibi in front of the entire world. It allowed Russian leadership to show its force projection capacity and advertise its recently modernized military forces. It demonstrated Russian political ability to play important roles as a world power, and not just a regional one. It also allowed Russia to present itself as an alternative to the US. And, maybe the most important aspect, it drew the international attention from its illegal actions in Ukraine.

Russia started a regional crisis in March 2014 when it decided to annex the territory of a sovereign neighbor. In November 2013, the riots in Kiev degenerated into violent clashes and the authorities lost control of the situation. There were shootings and the victims began to fill the local hospitals. Viktor Yanukovich, the Ukrainian president at the time, fled the country and found refuge in Moscow. The country demanded a pro-Western government, economic reforms, and anti-corruption measures.

The opinions about the reasons that determined the Russian President Vladimir Putin to interfere severely within the Ukrainian borders differ between the foreign politics analysts. One specialist says it was about the Russian defense system that could have jeopardize the Sevastopol Navy Base existence by a Ukrainian alliance with the West. Others considers the historical significance of Crimean peninsula to the Russian people. Few believe the reaction was just an improvisation of Putin as a response to an unpredictable change of government in Kiev.⁴⁴ According to the later analysis, all of them are right because each of the explanations contain little pieces of truth. There was a

⁴⁴ Daniel Treisman, "Why Putin Took Crimea—The Gambler in the Kremlin," *Reuters—Foreign Affairs* 2016, 47-54, 47.

combination of factors regarding time, space, and purpose of all the regional and international actors involved.

Over the years, NATO's several rounds of expansion brought it closer and closer to the Russian border, producing adversarial reactions from Kremlin. The West justified it by explaining the internal desire of each of the new member to join the collective defense system, but the Russians perceived it as an encirclement. What one side saw as an enlargement, the others consider it expansion. Once annexed, Crimea offered Russia a great strategic position at the Black Sea and an ideal operational bridgehead.⁴⁵

The ethnic Russians living in Ukraine were another good tool to use in conjunction with intense propaganda, creating the separatists movements, a perfect cover for the surrogate forces.⁴⁶ The historical Russian heritage of Ukraine in general and Crimea in particular was an important piece of the puzzle. There were countless occasions to stress that Crimea is the historic soul of Russia.⁴⁷

There is also an aspect regarding President Putin's strong personality, which added some complexity to this event. As a Deputy Mayor of Saint Petersburg, he held a speech in 1994 about the situation of more than 25 million Russian outside the borders, stressing the necessity to protect them. In 2008 at the Bucharest NATO summit, he warned the West about the consequences that a pro-Western orientation of Ukraine will induce to its own and regional stability. Over the years, besides his personal adversity for

⁴⁵ Timothy L. Thomas, *Russian Military Strategy—Impacting 21st Century Reform and Geopolitics* (Ft. Leavenworth: Foreign Military Study Office, 2015), 405.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

the U.S., he developed an entire philosophy about the New Russia, a country more adapt the new realities of present days as seen from Kremlin, encompassing vast territories and populations once part of the Soviet Union.⁴⁸

There were also economic reasons encountered by the Kremlin decision-makers when orchestrated the annexation and masked invasion of their neighbor. Eastern Ukraine lure coal resources, shale oil, and defense industry factories were important objective in the overall plan to destabilize and weaken the country in combination with its energy prices policies.⁴⁹

From March 2014 to March 2015, the separatists backed by Russia maintained an aggressive offensive against the Ukrainian Armed Forces, until a cease fire occurred up to August 2015. This situation was seen by many as a tactical break for separatists to get logistical reinforcement because in the same time Kremlin requests for banning nationalist political parties, changing the constitution to approve the Russian language as second official one, and to adopt the non-allied status for the country, similar with Finland during the Cold War, were unacceptable. However, since September 2015 Russia increased its participation in Syria and somehow, Ukraine became a stalemate, a similar situation with other frozen conflicts stage-managed by Moscow.⁵⁰

This crisis influenced all the new Eastern European NATO members, especially the Baltics and Poland, accompanied by Romania. It illustrated the growing Russian

⁴⁸ Ibid., 371, 405.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰ Ibid., 371, 393, 406.

threat and its new capabilities, forcing them to ask immediate reinsurance measures from their Western allies, adopt increased defense budgets and enhance investments in security infrastructure.⁵¹

Russian Reemergence Financed by Oil Prices

Russian rejuvenation was not easy. It began by facing many domestic and regional challenges.⁵² Locally, Gerard-Francois Dumont writes about negative demographic trends as the most significant problem, preventing Russia from regaining its super-power status.⁵³ Many do argue against that statement, saying rather that decreasing democracy is the main issue, along with reinventing the Russian economy. Oliver Crone is very appreciative about internal military reforms and restructuring while Emil Pain appears worried about the increased discourse favoring nationalism and imperialism in contemporary Russia.⁵⁴ Regionally, besides amplifying energy policies, maintaining territorial disputes among the many former Soviet states is an important goal, as well.⁵⁵ Frozen conflicts like the ones in Georgia, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Moldova or Ukraine are the main arguments to respond to Western expansion and to deny these countries the right to self-determination.

⁵¹ Ibid., 392.

⁵² David J. Galbreath, "Review Article—Putin's Russia and the 'New Cold War': Interpreting Myth and Reality," *Europe-Asia Studies* (2008): 3-4.

⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵ Ibid.

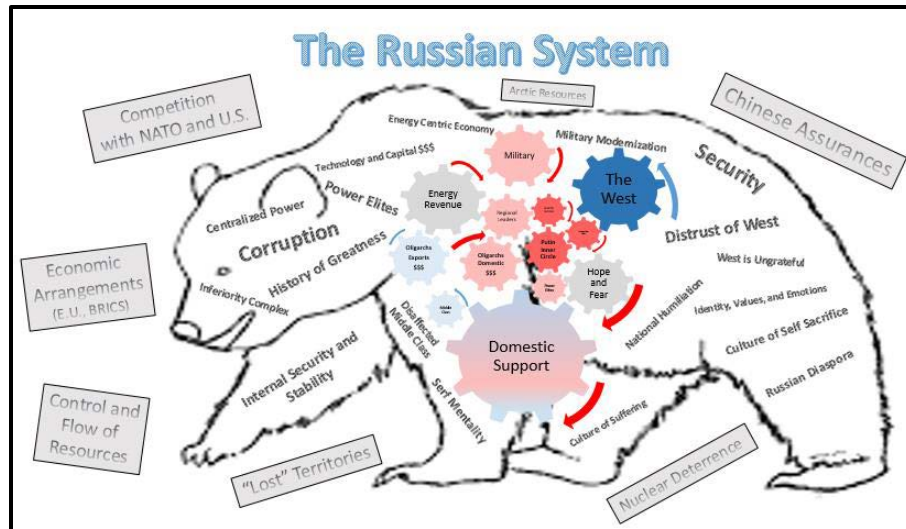


Figure 1. Visualization of the Russian system

Source: U.S. Army War College, Project 1704, *Analysis of Russian Strategy in Eastern Europe, an appropriate U.S. Response, and the implications of U.S. Landpower* (Carlisle Barracks PA: 2015), 34.

In conclusion, what started as a huge promise, ended as a disappointment and a threat to the world's peace. Sometime along the way, Russia became unpredictable and partially uncontrollable.

Recent Russian History as Written by Vladimir Vladimirovich Putin

The 1990s brought tremendous changes in world's political relationships, opening new perspectives. The US was unchallenged after the Soviet collapse, while Europe celebrated its reunification, and started to consider the costs to achieve it. Meanwhile, Russia seemed to be old and tired. It was left in bankruptcy, facing the wave of capitalism spreading over the nation and struggling in disputes with its neighbors.⁵⁶

⁵⁶ Ibid., 16.

Former USSR president Mikhail Gorbachev's reforms accelerated a fracturing system. When Boris Yeltsin came to power in 1991 after defeating an attempted coup, the situation was extreme. He tried to deal with the new security challenges by creating the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), cutting deals with Ukraine for basing the Black Sea Fleet in Crimea and with Kazakhstan for the use of Baikonur Cosmodrome.⁵⁷ In 1994, Russia signed the Partnership for Peace Agreement and from 1994 to 1996 waged a war with Chechnya to prevent a possible breakaway. Economically, he had to manage painful reforms such as the privatization process of more than 120.000 state firms and the alarming increasing rate of imports. In 1998, the Russian economy hit the bottom; the GDP in that year was 45 percent smaller than in 1989. In August 1999, he appointed Vladimir Putin as prime minister to coordinate the second Chechnya conflict, and in December 1999, Yeltsin resigned, setting Putin up to be his successor in leading a Russian Federation that was still very much trying to find its rooting.⁵⁸

The ambiguous Russian situation lasted until the summer of 2000 when Prime Minister Vladimir Putin became president. Based on the previous reforms and the rising prices of energy, he reinforced the economy and strengthened the middle class.⁵⁹ From 2003, he abandoned liberal economic rules and started to control production through the oligarchs and former intelligence services officers.⁶⁰ Worried about EU and NATO

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ Ibid., 17.

⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁰ Ibid.

expansion towards Russian borders, Putin started to protest, signaling his dissatisfaction to the West. Thereafter, he commenced a radical process to reorganize and modernize the conventional armed forces. In August 2008, he “conventionally” crushed the Georgian armed forces in five days. Perplexed, the Western reaction was weak and incoherent. Then, prevented by the Russian Constitution from serving a third term as president, Vladimir Putin made a step back from the political stage and again became the prime minister. He appointed Dmitry Medvedev as his successor for presidency in the next four years, but everybody knew who the true master of the Kremlin was. Once the White House welcomed a new administration in 2009, the circumstances seemed to favor Vladimir Putin. President Barack Obama initiated the political restart of US-Russia relationships and good signs appeared. Russia signed a new arms control treaty, then assisted US operations in Afghanistan and closely cooperated with the US on Iranian and Libyan issues in 2011. Russia even gained access to World Trade Organization (WTO) in August 2012, five months after Vladimir Putin’s re-election.⁶¹ Nevertheless, the honeymoon suddenly ended in February 2014 because of the aggression against Ukraine. Putin astonished the world when he suddenly annexed Crimea and started a hybrid war in the Eastern part of the country, breaking the 1996 Budapest Agreement. Relations only worsened when the Malaysian Air flight 17 was shot down over Ukraine and the Kremlin refused to accept the international investigation results and assume responsibility. Later, Russia also violated the Intermediate Range Nuclear Force Treaty, revealing its

⁶¹ U.S. Army War College, Project 1721, *Assessment in Russian Strategy in Eastern Europe and Recommendation in How to Leverage Landpower to Maintain the Peace*, Carlisle Barracks PA: 2016, 99-100.

expansionist intentions.⁶² The international community inflicted severe economic sanctions on Russia but, there were no tangible results. Russia searched for new trading partners such as China, India, Brazil or South Africa (BRICS) and continued to challenge the West on Syrian territory. In August 2015, Russia started to increase its military efforts in Syria and in October launched an intensive offensive against the rebels.⁶³ One month later, in November 2015, a Turkish F16 fighter shot down a Russian bomber, ratcheting up tensions between the two nations. Then, Vladimir Putin supported President Recep Tayip Erdogan during the failed coup of the Turkish Army in the summer of 2016. The two autocrat leaders shook hands again, and continued cooperative operations in Syria.⁶⁴ In March 2016, Russian troops began to withdraw partially from Syria and in December 2016, Russia led the peace negotiations between the Assad regime and the rebels.

There are many controversies related to the latest Russian transformation, but there is one aspect everybody agrees with – the decisive role of President Vladimir Vladimirovich Putin in creating and pursuing the concept of a New Russia. A complex personality, hot tempered and a man of conviction, the Russian president's notoriety was equally created by his determined actions and by the Western leaders' cautious, sometimes timid reactions. The media had various nuances to this general perception, with Russian media praising Putin unconditionally and the Western press declaring its fascination for an unconventional leadership style. In 2007, he was named the *Time*

⁶² Ibid.

⁶³ Gosu, 227-240.

⁶⁴ Ibid., 241-254.

magazine's Person of the Year.⁶⁵ *Forbes* magazine considered Putin the most powerful man on the planet four consecutive years, from 2013 until 2016.⁶⁶ So, who, really, is this man?

First of all, Vladimir Putin is the first. The first son of the nation, a great politician, and self-declared great specialist in everything. He is a true champion, a Judo black belt, a good hockey player, a skillful car-racing driver, a decent singer, and a practiced horse rider among other things. He makes great efforts to maintain his image as an omnipotent head of nation to gain his people's admiration, other leaders' respect and to intimidate his adversaries. He uses media as the main tool of propaganda, having no deontological rule between facts and inventions, when presenting the stories.⁶⁷

He is a man of traditions, who values Russian culture, customs, and history. He deeply believes in the Russian greatness as enduring and he will do anything to bring back the glorious days of the past. He thinks highly of the late Soviet Union and retells his own modified version of the story to the Russian people to transmit to them the same admiration for the past and the pride for their rich heritage, avoiding unfavorable details such as the real reasons of the collapse.⁶⁸

⁶⁵ Richard Stengel, "Person of the Year 2007," *Time*, accessed January 29, 2017, <http://content.time.com/time/specials/2007/0,28757,1690753,00.html>.

⁶⁶ David M. Ewalt, "The World's Most Powerful People 2016," *Forbes*, accessed January 29, 2017, <http://www.forbes.com/sites/davidewalt/2016/12/14/the-worlds-most-powerful-people-2016/#521f87ec368d>.

⁶⁷ Thomas, 9.

⁶⁸ Ibid.

However, Vladimir Putin is not a fearless leader. He has his own concerns about conspiracies, internal and external, and he sees “colored revolution” all around his borders.⁶⁹ This very important aspect greatly influenced his decisions and his autocratic leadership style, based on high pressure on the people around him or on other nations’ leaders.⁷⁰ Moreover, Vladimir Putin is a man of surprises, mostly unpleasant for its neighbors and the rest of the world. A pragmatist and opportunist, he acts rapidly and decisively, sometimes giving the impression he values more the shock than the long weighted decisions.⁷¹ Therefore, his opponents consider him a bit reckless.

As a child, he always stood up and fought for his beliefs, according to Masha Gessen, author of a book *The Man without a Face: The Unlikely Rise of Vladimir Putin*. As a State Security Committee officer (Komitet Gosudarstvennoi Bezopasnosti – KGB) he witnessed from the Dresden KGB building, the fall of the USSR empire.⁷² As the Kremlin leader, he looks strongly determined to rebuild the lost Russian glory by recasting its strategic role on the world stage, “consolidating the Russian Federation status as leading world power.”⁷³

⁶⁹ Ibid., 8.

⁷⁰ Ibid., 10.

⁷¹ Ibid.

⁷² Masha Gessen, *The Man without a Face: The Unlikely Rise of Vladimir Putin*, (New York: Riverhead Books, 2012), 43-71.

⁷³ Russian Federation Presidential Administration, *The Russian Federation's National Security Strategy*, (Moscow: Edict 683 of The Russian Federation President, December 31, 2015), II-28.

Russian Strategic Overview

What does Russia represent for today strategical environment? Finding the answer for this complicated question is a difficult quest. Perhaps Sir Winston Churchill words are more appropriate today than never before:

I cannot forecast to you the action of Russia. It is a riddle wrapped in a mystery inside an enigma; but perhaps there is a key. That key is Russian national interest.⁷⁴

So, what is the Russian national interest? According to many specialists, the Russian interest is the same as 300 years ago when Peter the Great signed the Treaty of Nystad, transforming Russia into a new European power.⁷⁵ The Russians want to consolidate the old Russian Empire territories, to control their neighbors and to obtain universal recognition as a world superpower. As a symbol of its European heritage, Czar Peter moved the capital city from Moscow to Saint Petersburg and for the following two centuries, Russia integrated into the European norms and values, for better or for worse. In 1917, following the Bolshevik revolution, the capital moved back to Moscow and Russia dramatically separated from its Europe orientation.⁷⁶ This revanchist attitude persists until present day despite the numerous efforts done by previous Western leaders, especially at the end of the Cold War or during the 2009 diplomatic and political

⁷⁴ The Churchill Society London, “The Russian Enigma— Winston Churchill radio broadcast at 1st October 1939,” accessed January 27, 2017, <http://www.churchill-society-london.org.uk/RusnEnig.html>.

⁷⁵ U.S. Army War College, Project 1721, x.

⁷⁶ Ibid.

relationship reset. Most of the time those efforts were in vain because Russia silently and ominously, follows its internal and external private agenda.

Internally, the Kremlin is interested in preserving a system that has been described as authoritative capitalism, a form of governance combining liberal economic features with influences of the centralized control achieved by institutionalized corruption and nepotism, the supervision and manipulation of the Russian oligarchs and a pronounced lack of transparency.⁷⁷ At the same time, the Russian leadership understands the importance of its population support, as a critical condition to maintain power; therefore, it praises patriotism to counterbalance the effect of the recently imposed economic sanctions and relies on increasing nationalism across Russian society for support.

Externally, Russia pursues extended boundaries in accordance with a traditional perception of its earned spheres of influence to include Ukraine, Moldova, the Baltics and the Caucasus region in its mission to provide protection for Russian people, inside or outside its borders.⁷⁸ It also looks for permissive buffer areas along Eastern Europe or Middle East and expanded influence within the Eurasian Economic Community (EAEC) to ensure the major player status.⁷⁹

Following these objectives, the Russian security strategies evolved during the recent years congruent with its constant growing capabilities. Benefiting from the painful

⁷⁷ Ibid., 27.

⁷⁸ Ibid., 28.

⁷⁹ Ibid.

reforms adopted by President Boris Yeltsin, the cheap Western credits and rise of energy prices because of the 2007 economic crisis, Russia gained access to a variety of means, and put that to use to reorganize and modernize its military.

The Russian National Security Strategy adopted in December 2015 clearly contests the Post-Cold War unipolar international status quo, claiming for a re-evaluation of the current world relationship arrangement.

State policy in the sphere of the safeguarding of national security and the socioeconomic development of the Russian Federation contributes to the implementation of the strategic national priorities and the effective protection of national interests. A solid basis has been created at this time for further increasing the Russian Federation's economic, political, military, and spiritual potentials and for enhancing its role in shaping a polycentric world.⁸⁰

Additionally, Russia positively weights its economy, considering it capable to overcome the recessions and the sanctions applied by adversarial governments.

Russia's economy has demonstrated the ability to maintain and strengthen its potential in conditions of world economic instability and the application of the restrictive economic measures introduced against the Russian Federation by a number of countries.⁸¹

⁸⁰ Russian Federation Presidential Administration, *The Russian Federation's National Security Strategy*, II-7.

⁸¹ Ibid., II-9.

Furthermore, Russia identifies as a main threat to its national interests the U.S. and its allies from NATO, an organization that expands its capabilities, membership ambitions and weapons systems beyond the limits of Russian acceptance.

The Russian Federation's implementation of an independent foreign and domestic policy is giving rise to opposition from the United States and its allies, who are seeking to retain their dominance in world affairs. (...) The buildup of the military potential of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and the endowment of it with global functions pursued in violation of the norms of international law, the galvanization of the bloc countries' military activity, the further expansion of the alliance, and the location of its military infrastructure closer to Russian borders are creating a threat to national security.⁸²

This new expansionist model raised numerous worries and challenges worldwide because 2015 Russian Security Strategy continued the pattern established by the previous governmental security documentation and generated the latest aggressive actions of the Russian Federation. In 2015, General Breedlove, the highest military representative of the West, in his capacity as Commander of US European Command and NATO Supreme Allied Command Europe Commander (SACEUR), described the current Russian menace when presenting the US Forces Posture Statement to the House Armed Services Committee. His report mentioned the Russian assertive attitude as one of the main threats in the European theater along with the foreign fighters concealed by the refugees' waves coming from Middle East and transnational threat from Africa. Besides the illegal annexation of territories from a neighboring country, Russia is using the frozen conflict method and its instruments of national power to block the European and North-Atlantic

⁸² Ibid., II-12, II-15.

integration of nations from its proximity such as Georgia, Ukraine or Moldova.⁸³ It built-up an Anti Access Area Denial (A2AD) zone by deploying Iskander M missiles in the enclave province of Kaliningrad, Crimea and Syria. It withdrew from the Conventional Armed Forces in Europe Treaty. It continued to use the energy as a compulsion weapon. It resumed a provocative posture by intercepting US aircraft or shadowing US vessels in international waters.⁸⁴ It also arrayed numerous armed forces along the Western border and organizing ostentatious offensive operations such as ZAPAD 2013 or LAGODA 2016 exercises.⁸⁵

Politics

Russia's political system always lived and developed under the constant fear of an invasion from one of the neighbors, especially the West seen as the permanent aggressor.⁸⁶ The Vikings in the tenth century, the Mongols on 1223 and 1236, The Swedish in 1707, the French in 1812, the Allied intervention during the 1918 Russian Civil War or the Germans in 1941, all these superpowers at the time wanted to subdue the Russian national will of self-determination and extract its valuable resources.⁸⁷

⁸³ U.S. Congress, Statement of General Philip Breedlove, 4.

⁸⁴ Ibid., 5.

⁸⁵ U.S. Army War College, Project 1721, 104.

⁸⁶ U.S. Army War College, Project 1704, *Analysis of Russian Strategy in Eastern Europe, an appropriate U.S. Response, and the implications of U.S. Landpower*, Carlisle Barracks PA: 2015, 18.

⁸⁷ Geoffrey Parker, *The Cambridge Illustrated History of Warfare* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1995).

Therefore, this is the best explanation for the Russian politicians' inclination for aggressive pre-emptive actions, "buffer zone" security strategy as a general foreign affairs approach and the affinity for control, autocracy, totalitarianism regarding internal decisions.

Russia has a territory of 6.6 million square miles and a population of approximately 140 million people, well educated, with more than 90 percent of the adults being high school graduates.⁸⁸ The demographic structure is a heterogeneous combination of more than one hundred nationalities.⁸⁹ The most important minorities along with the Russian 77 percent are Tatars 3.7 percent, Ukrainians 1.4 percent, Bashkir 1.1 percent, Chechens 1.0 percent, and Mongols, less than 1.0 percent.⁹⁰ To gain this population trust, the Russian leadership always praised the nationalist and patriotic feelings, sometime manipulating history to ensure the popular support. In addition, from the old Czars to contemporary presidents, the Kremlin, meaning "the citadel inside the city," had run the country with an autocratic style, called imperialism, dictatorship, communism, or autocratic democracy.⁹¹

The Russian Constitution is a blend of the most important Western fundamental laws, such as the US, the German or the French. Based on three state classical pillars,

⁸⁸ U.S. Army War College, Project 1704, 17-18.

⁸⁹ Jim Nichols, *Russian Political, Economic, and Security Issues and U.S. Interests*, Washington, DC: Congressional Research Service, 2014, 3.

⁹⁰ Ibid., 4.

⁹¹ Max Vasmer, "Etymological dictionary, word 'Кремль'," accessed January 30, 2017, <http://starling.rinet.ru>.

executive, legislative and judicial, the Russian Constitution presents some particularities that dramatically favor presidential powers.⁹² Since November 2008, the presidential mandate is six years long. Some of the most interesting features of the presidential administration competence are the assignment of the prime minister and the ministers, and the ability to dissolve the legislature, calling for new elections, if necessary.

The legislature is comprised of two chambers, the State Duma lower chamber and the Federation Council, upper chamber. The State Duma consists of 450 seats, all assigned based on party list election for five years, with a 7 percent threshold. The Federal Council has 166 representatives, called senators, two from each of the regions and republics.⁹³ They are not elected, therefore one senator will be appointed by the governor and one by the regional legislature.⁹⁴ In contrast with the presidential institution, the legislature faces many obstacles if trying to admonish the government with a non-confidence veto. The government depends more on the president rather than the legislature.⁹⁵

Finally, the judicial branch contains the Constitutional Court ruling over disputes between government branches and the legality of implemented laws, the Supreme Arbitration Court addressing mostly economic arguments, and the Supreme Court as the

⁹² Nichols, 4.

⁹³ Ibid.

⁹⁴ Ibid., 12.

⁹⁵ Ibid.

highest appellate court.⁹⁶ This system is probably the most unreformed component of the Russian state, with many provisions originating from the Soviet era and many attempts to control different law courts. President Putin himself had an initiative to merge the Supreme Court with the Supreme Arbitration Court, seen as the most independent one, in an attempt to obtain a higher control over economic quarrels.⁹⁷

The overall internal political atmosphere is not encouraging for democracy, at least not for the liberal one, as the West knows and promotes. Systematically, since 1999, Vladimir Putin's leadership is decisively influencing the political arena.

In the first two terms, his internal main objective was to consolidate the centralized control and settle an autocratic political environment. He launched his campaign in 2000 exploiting his management contribution in the second war in Chechnya, and then he started to control the Russian economy by dominating the oligarchs. Most famous was the Mikhail Khodorkovsky case, an oligarch condemned for economic offenses in 2005 and freed in 2013.⁹⁸ The next step was the consolidation of security laws, an opportunity that arose after the 2004 terrorist attacks in the town of Beslan. As a result, instead of being elected, Putin gained the power to name governors, the independent deputies were eliminated and later, in 2006, he passed a law to ban the

⁹⁶ Ibid.

⁹⁷ Ibid.

⁹⁸ Ibid., 5-6.

non-government organizations (NGOs) suspected of receiving any form of external support or funds to create political unrest.⁹⁹

Simultaneously, the media was severely restricted and independent stations were constrained. Many adversarial journalists were banned, arrested or even killed.¹⁰⁰ In 2008, Vladimir Putin was confident enough to appoint Dmitry Medvedev as his replacement for presidency and to step down into the prime minister position again for four years, in order to comply with the letter, if not the spirit, of the Russian Constitution which limited the president to two consecutive terms in office.¹⁰¹ A second election was preceded by several protests and President Medvedev made some minor political concessions such as gubernatorial elections, small parties' representation in the State Duma and conditions to start a new political party.¹⁰² In the 2012 presidential elections, Vladimir Putin won the elections with 63.6 percent of the 71.8 million votes, but the protests did not stop until they were violently repressed.¹⁰³ He immediately initiated internal legislative and economic reforms, increased defense expenditures, and requested a new foreign affairs policy.¹⁰⁴ The opposition suffered numerous prosecutions while

⁹⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid.

¹⁰¹ Pavel Baev, "Medvedev Tries to Prove His Relevance In the Putin-Centric State," *Eurasia Daily Monitor* 8, no. 181 (October 3, 2011), accessed February 4, 2017, <https://jamestown.org/program/medvedev-tries-to-prove-his-relevance-in-the-putin-centric-state/>.

¹⁰² Nichols, 8.

¹⁰³ Ibid., 9.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid., 10.

human rights abuses exponentially increased. Well known examples of this include the trial of an already deceased Sergey Magnitsky or the multi-year sentence meted out to the activist group Pussy Riot for singing anti-Putin songs in a church.¹⁰⁵ However, since 2014, foreign policy became the center of Russian society's attention and after the State Duma approved the illegal annexation of Crimea, Putin's internal support increased despite the internal political and economic situation.

Economics

Russian recent history and the political developments decisively influenced the Russian economy's evolution in the last decades. After the end of the Cold War, Russia became an important international partner, especially for large consumers with a voracious appetite for resources, like China or, more significantly, Europe. A further analysis must examine the lessons of the recent developments, the characteristics of the present and the perspective of the future regarding the Russian economy.

To begin with, the recent economic history favors the Russians. Perceived as having friendly and docile economic policies in the 1990s and early 2000s, Russia expanded economic ties with the EU, which became more and more dependent on Russian energy and its financial resources. In return, the Kremlin gained increased political influence over Europe. As an example, the EU alone imported 11.2 billion barrels of oil and 14.5 trillion cubic feet of gas per day in 2009.¹⁰⁶ From the total imports,

¹⁰⁵ Ibid.

¹⁰⁶ Sarah O. Ladislaw, Leed Maren and Walton A. Molly, "New Energy, New Geopolitics—Balancing Stability and Leverage," *Center for Strategic and International Studies* (2014): 19.

Russia is supplying Europe 33 percent for oil, 25 percent for natural gas and 23 percent for solid fuels.¹⁰⁷ Therefore, in the last ten years, the Russian global trade grew from \$210 million in 2003 to \$730 million in 2014.¹⁰⁸

After a severe crash from 1992 to 1998, when the GDP drastically decreased 6.8 percent annually, the economy started to recover and return some profit with an annual increase of 6.9 percent, up to 2008.¹⁰⁹ When the economic crisis struck, due to financial weaknesses and overreliance on energy exports, the Russian economy initially contracted in 2009 by 7.9 percent, and recovered with a more moderate growth of 4.5 percent in 2010, 4.3 percent in 2011, 3.4 percent in 2012 and only 1 percent in 2013.¹¹⁰ Russian accession to the World Trade Organization (WTO) in 2012 played a significant role in regulating the Russian markets. The leadership agreed to implement and comply with new liberal commercial rules such as nondiscriminatory imports, compelling tariff levels, transparent trading laws, limiting agriculture subventions, enforcing intellectual property rights and forgoing the use of local content requirements and other trade-related

¹⁰⁷ Ibid., 20.

¹⁰⁸ Conlin A. Heather and Stefanov Ruslan, “The Kremlin Playbook—Understanding Russian Influence in Central and Eastern Europe,” *Center for Strategic and International Studies* (2016): IV.

¹⁰⁹ Nichols, 34.

¹¹⁰ Ibid.

investment measures.¹¹¹ At the end of 2012, Russia's GDP was \$2.015 trillion, the sixth largest economy in the world.¹¹²

However, at the end of 2013, the war in Ukraine broke out and since May 2014 Russia has dealt with drastic economic sanctions imposed by the West. The Russian national currency, the Ruble, began a depreciation process and the index of the Russian markets reduced. The current status of the economy favors the Russian leadership. President Putin and his inner circle of political leaders or his favorite oligarchs are firmly controlling an economy predominantly based on the extraction of oil, natural gas and other commodities, but which plays a crucial role on the international oil and natural gas industries. Institutionalized corruption and patronage are ravaging characteristics of the economic environment, allowing the system to control the decisions, the policies and the profits.¹¹³ In 2012, Russia was first place in the world for natural gas reserves (18 percent) and second place in world oil resources (5 percent).¹¹⁴ In terms of exploitation of these resources, Russia is the world leader of oil production (13 percent), producing 10 million barrels per day from which 6 million goes for export. These statistics demonstrate the psychological advantage Russian leaders possess when negotiating economic and political aspects at strategic levels, especially with their European partners, heavily dependent on those resources. There is an old Romanian proverb stating that every stick

¹¹¹ Ibid.

¹¹² U.S. Army War College, Project 1704, 28.

¹¹³ Ladislav, Leed and Walton, 13.

¹¹⁴ Nichols, 35.

has two ends. This reliance is dual by its nature, because Russia is also counting on the financial revenues of this exchange to diversify its economic investments and finance its social, military or political projects. The oil and gas industry represents 16 percent of Russian GDP, 53 percent of overall federal budget and 70 percent of the Russian exports.¹¹⁵ In 2011, EU paid for 53 percent of the Russian energy production, CIS for 30 percent and 17 percent went to Asia or other non-EU countries, like Turkey.¹¹⁶ In addition, considering CIS nations' late payments or their significantly diminished prices more often granted from political reasons rather than economic, the European customer role seems to be substantial.

To conclude, the future of the Russian economy is difficult to predict, since it depends greatly on the political decisions, although a certain degree of interdependence exists.

The energy sector will remain the major driver of the economy, therefore the Russian decision makers will continue to expand their distribution network and control other neighboring countries ones, such as Ukraine or Belarus.¹¹⁷ Gazprom, the most important firm that controls the Russian energy commerce, own the majority of the Russian distribution network. Russia has in place the North Stream project, a straight pipeline from Russia to Germany. It also started to plan the South Stream project, to link

¹¹⁵ U.S. Army War College, Project 1704, 30.

¹¹⁶ Nichols, 36.

¹¹⁷ In 2009, there were important disputes between Ukraine and Russia that influenced the distribution of natural gas to Europe and even today there are some economic disagreements between Russia and Belarus.

to the Southern Europe through Black Sea, Bulgaria, Greece Italy, Serbia, Hungary, and Austria. When the West imposed the 2014 economic sanctions, the EU blocked this initiative and looked for alternative solutions like the Southern Corridor, a project that would connect Europe with Azerbaijan and Caspian Sea area, a move that determined the Russians to look for different options like a collaboration with China, Japan, and South Korea. From 7 percent of its exports on these destinations in 2010, Russia is planning to extend to 20 percent by 2030.¹¹⁸ In fact, Gazprom is working on a \$400 billion energy deal with China, while the Kremlin is negotiating a nuclear energy project with Argentina.¹¹⁹

While these projects look promising on paper and they can bring breath life back in to the Russian economy, but not in the short term. Moreover, they depend on the future world-order design and favorable strategic contexts. Until Russia could benefit from those deals, they must confront the steep realities of today's constraints and sanctions imposed by the Western powers as a response to Russian political actions.

Oil prices dropped substantially in December 2014, from an average of \$110 per barrel to an average of \$60. The Russians needed a price of \$105.00 to maintain its budget balance.¹²⁰ In these conditions, the Russian's must diversify their investment fronts and areas, looking for alternative domains. Russia can continue to be a cheap oil and gas producer but even in this case, some investments are required. For example,

¹¹⁸ Ibid., 36-38.

¹¹⁹ U.S. Army War College, Project 1704, 32.

¹²⁰ The Economist, "The Russian economy: The end of the line," accessed February 11, 2017, <http://www.economist.com/node/21633816/print>.

Russia owns the largest gas reserve in the world as mentioned before (44.7 trillion cubic meters) but a third of those are located in the Yamal Peninsula and in the Shtokman field in the Barents Sea and require funding to develop access.¹²¹ The Arctic zone is also strategically important for Russia and its recent militarization actions in the area highlights its interest to secure future resources and influence.¹²²

Nevertheless, Russia also has other concerns to deal with, such as currency depreciation, capital flows, or funding the development of the new annexed territory of Crimea. The weak Ruble is creating animosities among the Russian executives because it becomes expensive to service the foreign debt. Although Russia has a moderate national debt, (\$57 billion, 35 percent of the GDP) the corporate debt is nearly ten times higher. At the same time, it changes the balance between imports and exports since the imports become more expensive.¹²³

Another major problem is stopping the capital flowing from Russian markets. In 2014, estimates showed an amount of more than \$100 billion flow, \$120 billion in 2015, \$75 billion in 2016 and approximate \$55 billion in 2017. When addressing the Russian Parliament in December 2014, Putin pleaded for amnesty for those returning their funds

¹²¹ U.S. Army War College, Project 1704, 30.

¹²² Vera Zakem, Saunders Paul and Daniel Antoun, “Mobilizing compatriots: Russia’s strategy, Tactics, and Influence in the former Soviet Union,” *CNA Analysis and solutions* (2015): 13.

¹²³ U.S. Army War College, Project 1704, 29.

into the country, a four year of free-tax policy for new investments and prompted the National Welfare Fund to lend money for the major Russian banks in need.¹²⁴

Additionally, the newly annexed Crimean territory needed financial aid from the federal budget. According to Deputy Crimean Affairs Minister Andrey Sokolov statement in 2014, Russia was planning to spend \$2.2 billion in 2015 and \$13.6 billion by 2020, a very ambitious plan considering the actual possibilities of the Russian economy in general. Furthermore, the separatists regions of Donetsk and Lugansk need the Kremlin financial attention as well and the signs are not very encouraging.¹²⁵ In the winter of 2015 when Kiev cut the gas on those areas, Prime Minister Medvedev declared that Gazprom is delivering on “commercial base only.”¹²⁶ To continue, the Economist published a poll nine months after the Crimean annexation, revealing a drastic support drop from 73 percent to 23 percent among the Russian population regarding the continuation of Russian troop presence in Ukraine.¹²⁷

In conclusion, Russia is trying to explore other domains to invest for future economic developments, it looks for different options and partnerships across the globe, especially in Asia to replace some of the European trading gaps caused by the recent

¹²⁴ Ibid.

¹²⁵ Zakem, Saunders and Antoun, 28.

¹²⁶ Russia Today, “PM Medvedev orders commencement of gas deliveries to embattled Donbas,” accessed February 11, 2017, <http://www.rt.com/politics/233743-russia-ukraine-heating-medvedev/>.

¹²⁷ U.S. Army War College, Project 1704, 27.

sanctions and is struggling to maintain the ongoing internal projects, economic, social and, very important, the military ones.

Military Factors

At the end of the Cold War, the USSR and the Warsaw Pact collapsed. The main cause of the crash was not military action, but rather economics. From that moment, Russia who inherited the enormity of the Red Army, faced tremendous challenges trying to reform it, maybe the most impressive demilitarization process of a nation in the world history. From 5 million personnel in the Army in 1988, with annual expenditure of \$246 billion, Russia reduced its forces to 1 million in 1994, and allocated only \$14 billion. Today, the Russian Red Army consists of 700 thousand soldiers, still the biggest force in the region, with the exception of Popular Republic of China's army in Asia.¹²⁸

During the presidency of Boris Yeltsin, the military suffered the most. Funding was insufficient, barely covering the social expenses of the underpaid personnel, let alone maintenance, training, and equipment costs. In the 1990s, Russia was involved in minor conflicts in Moldova and Tajikistan and later in 1994 in the first Chechen War, in which it had to scrape to find about 65,000 soldiers to carry out that operation. When the *Kursk* submarine tragedy happened in 2000, the captain's monthly salary at the time was \$200.¹²⁹

¹²⁸ Dmitri Trenin, "The Revival of the Russian Military—How Moscow Reloaded," *Reuters —Foreign Affairs* 2016, 23-29, 23.

¹²⁹ *Ibid.*

The military situation started changing in 2000, when President Vladimir Putin came to power and the price of oil rose. Realizing the importance of the military instrument, he initiated drastic reforms starting with the federal budget funding, modernization equipment programs, the military personnel status, the organizational structures and functions in the overarching strategic concept and new doctrine to employ the new army.

Today, the Russian military relies on its nuclear arsenal to maintain Russian status as a world superpower but its armed forces, primarily the land forces, ensure its regional supremacy. Although institutionalized corruption affected its reputation, the military significantly rehabilitated its prominence with the resumption of large training exercises, long strategic bombing patrols, navy show of force deployments, and more importantly, because of the efficacy demonstrated in operations of the last decade: the Second Chechnya War in 1999, Georgia in 2008, Crimea in 2014, and ongoing in Syria and Eastern Ukraine.¹³⁰

Furthermore, it is necessary to apply the DOTMLPF evaluation framework to conduct an in-depth investigation of the Russian military complex system, to describe the current military power capacity and the status of the reorganization and modernization process.

Doctrine

One of President Putin's convictions, even from the beginning of his mandate, was that the Diplomatic and the Economic instruments of national power are not enough

¹³⁰ Nichols, 29.

to enable the Russians influence in the international arena. He believed the world nations would listen twice to Russian arguments only with reinforced Military and Informational tools, to promote the desired security environment.¹³¹ Following the West's example and analyzing the latest conflict involving the US and its allied forces, Vladimir Putin approved his first strategic security document in 2000, the National Defense Strategy. According to this act, the Ministry of Defense leadership became civilian and the General Staff became subordinate. Furthermore, his first appointed civilian minister of defense was Sergey Ivanov, a graduate of Leningrad State University and a former KGB, SVR, and FSB agent with active missions in the United Kingdom, Finland, and Kenya.¹³²

The next important document for the Russian security doctrine was the "Ivanov doctrine," also known as the Defense White Paper. A traditional lack of an adequate doctrine for waging small wars partially led to Russian failures in Afghanistan and the first Chechen war. Seeking to avoid the same mistakes in the future, this document clearly delineated the operative forces, (strategical, operational and tactical) from the institutional forces (strategic nuclear, space, air defense and administrative entities designated to man, train and equip the troops). Very important, it also set the limits of the Russian engagements, no more than two local or regional conflicts and one peacekeeping mission, simultaneous.¹³³

¹³¹ Foreign Policy, "Being Strong—Why Do We Need to Rebuild Our Military by Vladimir Putin," accessed February 12, 2017, <http://foreignpolicy.com/2012/02/21/being-strong/>.

¹³² U.S. Army War College, Project 1704, 25.

¹³³ Ibid.

In 2010, Russia adopted a new doctrine with the intention to capture the lessons learned from the Georgian conflict and concurrently, the lessons learned by the US and NATO forces during the Afghan and Iraq wars. Influenced by the rapid developments of the Syrian and Ukrainian struggles, the strategic shift of the US towards Pacific and other political trends throughout Europe and the world, four years later Russia updated its National Defense Strategy with a new document adopted in December 2014. Like its previous version, the new National Defense Strategy defined the future battle, extended the hybrid approach, outlined the strategic initiative concept (based on gaining the supremacy on the air, land and sea), included the popular movements and protests as a tool of the warfare and highlighted the threats Russia is facing.¹³⁴ In the Russian interpretation, war in the future will be a combination of military assets with political, economic and informational means, which will facilitate a massive use of new weapon systems, high technology devices heavily relying on robotics and electronic warfare. To achieve success, the enemy should be decisively engaged throughout its entire defense depth, including the space, air, land and sea, using lethal and non-lethal capabilities.¹³⁵

Russia is also communicating publicly the threats perceived to jeopardize its internal balance and external interests. The main danger is NATO expansion to its Western borders, a maneuver that, in the Russian vision, justified its actions in Georgia,

¹³⁴ Ibid., 55.

¹³⁵ Thomas, 230-231.

Ukraine or even Moldova.¹³⁶ Moreover, the doctrine presents the causality link between the reemergence of frozen conflicts from the proximity of the Russian borders and the “colored revolutions” from former USSR countries to the NATO expansion process.¹³⁷ The “Gerasimov Doctrine” encapsulated this approach to warfare, and will be discussed later in the Leadership section.

To conclude, even if the Russian doctrine is defined as mainly defensive and the military relies mainly on the strategical capacity of the nuclear weapons to deter future conflicts, Russia maintains a significant amount of conventional armed forces with a significant reserve force in order to defend the longest border of any nation and to oppose the threats emerging from everywhere.¹³⁸

Organization

When the Five Day War with Georgia ended, the Russian military leadership started to analyze the operations and emphasized the lessons learned from the conflict. By October 2008, they already had launched a program called “The Future Outlook of the Russian Federation Armed Forces and Priorities for its Creation for the period of 2009–2020,” a vision of the future Russian forces. According to this document, organizational reforms should take place reducing the officer corps, retraining the non-commissioned officers, reducing central command structures and reducing the number of military

¹³⁶ The majority of Russian official documentation uses the expression “NATO expansion,” while the West defines the same process with the expression “NATO enlargement.”

¹³⁷ U.S. Army War College, Project 1704, 55.

¹³⁸ Connell and Evans, 7-9.

schools.¹³⁹ They tried to connect the operational combat readiness with the organizational structure of the army, thus they replaced large divisions partially filled with permanent personnel and partially at the mobilization, with smaller but completely staffed brigades.¹⁴⁰

In 2017, the Red Army downsized from six to four military districts, West, South, East and Central. The Western district is the most important in the Russian defense vision, it benefits of the best equipment and personnel and encompasses the majority of the air force assets. The Southern district forces do not have the same status quo as the Western ones but they lead the Ukrainian operations and maintain a high state of readiness to meet potential threats from separatists, Islamic extremists in the North Caucasus, the energy rich Caspian basin and the vitally important Black Sea. The Eastern district covers wide areas from the oriental side of Russia, protecting the country's flank against a presumed Chinese aggression, while the Central district acts as a strategic reserve, more or less. In this array of forces, Russia has limited flexibility in massing its forces against a certain threat, without leaving gaps in the defense system. At the same time, this huge geography causes various sustainment support challenges when conducting operations.¹⁴¹

After the Crimean operations, there were voices insinuating that the Russians experimented with a new category of troops, the Rapid Reaction Forces, a similar

¹³⁹ Nichols, 30.

¹⁴⁰ U.S. Army War College, Project 1704, 56.

¹⁴¹ Connell and Evans, 7-9.

concept with the Very High Readiness Joint Task Forces (VJTf) in the overall NATO Response Force (NRF) structure.¹⁴² These forces will consist of Special Forces and Airborne forces primarily, augmented with up to three brigades of conventional forces.¹⁴³

The Russian reorganization process addressed the forces and the command structures as well. Since 1 August 2015, the Russian Armed Forces have a new branch called the Aerospace Forces and many analysts considers this new entity to be the fifth, unnamed, military district. Built similarly to the North American Aerospace Defense Command (NORAD), this center consists of a network of radars capable to provide early warning in case of any ground or space missile attacks, as a reaction of the US Global Strike concept.¹⁴⁴ This new branch completely encompassed the Air Forces. The Russian defense forces now consists of three other branches, the Ground Forces, the Navy and the Strategic Rocket Force.¹⁴⁵ Moreover, the Russian Ministry of Defense Sergey Shoygu recently talked about the formation of the new information warfare troops in the support of the state propaganda that, in the future, has to be “clever, smart and

¹⁴² Charles K. Bartles, and Roger N. McDermott, “Russia’s Military Operations in Crimea: Road-Testing Rapid Reaction Capabilities,” *Problems of Post Communism*, 61, no.6 (November 2014): 46-63, 56.

¹⁴³ U.S. Army War College, Project 1704, 56.

¹⁴⁴ Franz-Stefan Gady, “Russia Creates Powerful New Military Branch to Counter NATO,” *The Diplomat*, August 7, 2015, accessed March 28, 2017. <http://thediplomat.com/2015/08/russia-creates-powerful-new-military-branch-to-counter-nato/>.

¹⁴⁵ Thomas, 174.

efficient.”¹⁴⁶ With a new updated doctrine and with new organization, the Russians also increased the training level.

Training

In the view of Russian military leaders, the training process is very important if not crucial. From a Russian perspective, military strategy, as the highest level of the operational art, consists in preparing, planning, and achieving political and military goals through the employment of forces and resources.¹⁴⁷ The overarching purpose of the armed forces is to sustain and enforce the political actions of the government, the main goal being the political impact rather than the fighting power of the force.¹⁴⁸ For that reason, having new doctrinal provisions in place, the Russian training process focused on adjusting the training system and implementing the changes into regular operations.

As previously mentioned, the military schools were reduced in quantity with the purpose of increasing the learning and training quality of the officers and other ranks. The training regiments continued to emphasize the need of integrating combined arms throughout the entire operational spectrum (especially armor, infantry and artillery) along with the Spetsnaz integration (Russian Special Forces). To increase the readiness status, the number of exercises grew considerably in the last years. In 2014 alone, the Russian forces conducted more than 1,500 regular exercises, while in 2015 there were accounted

¹⁴⁶ Vladimir Isachenkov, “Russia military acknowledges new branch: info warfare troops,” *ABC News*, accessed January 27, 2017, <http://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory/russian-military-continues-massive-upgrade-45652381>.

¹⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 80.

¹⁴⁸ Connell and Evans, 7-9.

about 150 significant training events from which 18 were major joint and combined arms exercises, to include an important mobilization component and maneuver, fires and stability training situations. In accordance with the new strategic orientation, the troops did not neglect mountain operations and arctic region training.¹⁴⁹ The training emphasized forces' capacity to adapt to endure realities of the battlefield and to utilize new rules of employment. It included the role of population in shaping operations, ambiguous hybrid warfare, the massive use of disinformation and misinformation, the use of horrific violence as an intimidation tool of the local population and the integration of new technologies effects on the operational environment, such as Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAVs), reactive armor or advance munitions. In addition, an essential aspect is the overall goal to export Russian strategy and its tactics and procedures to other nations' military forces around the globe, such as Iran, China or India (preferably US adversarial regimes).¹⁵⁰

Materiel

In 2008, Russian leaders had to take a crucial decision regarding Georgia's western orientation, although at the NATO summit held in Bucharest few months earlier did not offer Georgia a Membership Action Plan (MAP). Nevertheless, they did receive strong promises and that triggered Russian actions. The war in Georgia, however, revealed many operational deficiencies within the Russian military systems: lack of training, desynchronization of command and control process, logistical breakdowns, and

¹⁴⁹ U.S. Army War College, Project 1704, 56.

¹⁵⁰ Connell and Evans, 19.

more importantly, outdated equipment. For example, the Russian T-72 tanks were not as advanced as the Georgian T-72s, which had been modernized with GPS systems, thermal imaging, night sights and more efficient communication systems.¹⁵¹ At that time, the Russian defense industry, although the second largest provider of arms in the world, could not equip its own army with advanced weaponry, to match the adversary or Kremlin leaders' ambitions.¹⁵² Today, the situation is completely changed. The defense industry is more proficient, benefiting from the full support of President Putin and a generous funding program (700 billion for 2011-2020 period), he promoted to revitalize and modernize the armed forces and consequently, the defense industry.¹⁵³

The new developed programs included all armed forces categories, from military vehicles to ships, submarines and aircraft. The Army focused on the modernization of the T-72 tanks and the production of T-90A tank, the armored personnel carrier BTR-82A already spotted in Crimea and Eastern Ukraine and the light utility vehicle Tiger designated to replace some of the older BTRs (personnel carriers).¹⁵⁴ The airborne troops received INFAUNA jammer and JUDOIST electronic intelligence systems.

¹⁵¹ U.S. Army War College, Project 1704, 57.

¹⁵² Athena Bryce-Rogers, "Russian Military Reform in the Aftermath of the 2008 Russia-Georgia War," *Demokratizatsiya Online* 21 no. 3 (2013):338-369, accessed March 28, 2017, https://www2.gwu.edu/~ieresgwu/assets/docs/demokratizatsiya%20archive/GWASHU_DEMO_21_3/T0320R1173M61414/T0320R1173M61414.pdf, 362.

¹⁵³ Nichols, 30.

¹⁵⁴ The GAZ Tigr (Russian: Тигр and English: Tiger) is a Russian 4x4, multipurpose, all-terrain infantry mobility vehicle manufactured by GAZ, first delivered to the Russian Army in 2006. Primarily used by the Russian Federation's armed forces, it is also used by numerous other countries and organizations.

Communications and navigation systems improved as well, since the troops in Ukraine were using new “push-to-talk” systems.¹⁵⁵ The plan expands with the Moscow leaders desire to invite world known defense firms to produce the systems in Russia instead of being purchased from abroad.¹⁵⁶

The Russian security forces are in the middle of this ambitious modernization process designed to reassess the Russian superpower status. In March 2015, Ministry of defense issued a public statement to lay out the future equipment acquisitions priorities. The first listed are the strategic nuclear forces and aerospace forces, followed by communications, reconnaissance, command and control, electronic warfare, Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAVs), robotized attack complexes, military transport aviation, precision guided munitions and individual protection systems.¹⁵⁷ In January 2017, speaking to the Russian State Duma, the Ministry of Defense Sergey Shoygu stated that the army already received 41 new intercontinental ballistic missiles in 2016 and three more regiments of Russia's strategic nuclear forces will receive new missiles in 2017, each regiment having 10 launchers. In addition, new equipment will continue to arrive in 2017 as well, with 170 new aircraft for the air force, 17 ships for the navy, and 905 tanks and other armored vehicles for the army. However, new weapons will require new

¹⁵⁵ Push-to-talk (PTT), also known as press-to-transmit, is a method of having conversations or talking on half-duplex communication lines, including two-way radio, using a momentary button to switch from voice reception mode to transmit mode.

¹⁵⁶ Cristopher John Chivers and Herszenhorn M. David, “In Crimea, Russia Showcases a Rebooted Army,” *New York Times*, accessed February 12, 2017, http://www.nytimes.com/2014/04/03/world/europe/crimea-offers-showcase-for-russias-rebooted-military.html?_r=0.

¹⁵⁷ Thomas, 130.

personnel, since the air force alone needs at least 1300 pilots, planned for recruitment in 2018.¹⁵⁸

Leadership

The top leader of the security system hierarchy is President Vladimir Putin. In 2012, he appointed new leaders to conduct the reforms and the ongoing operations managed by the Minister of Defense. Former General of the Army Sergey Shoygu replaced Anatoly Serdyukov in the Minister of Defense position and Colonel General Valery Gerasimov (currently General of the Army) became Chief of the General Staff of the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation and First Deputy Minister of Defense of the Russian Federation, replacing General of the Army Makarov. The new leaders continued their predecessors' reform work and even improved some of the concepts and programs.¹⁵⁹ However, the general impression was that Vladimir Putin prepared the background for its future actions by these appointments, due to their command philosophies being congruent with his.

General Gerasimov became well known after an interview for the Russian Academy of Military Science's Military-Industrial Courier, entitled "The Value of Science in Prediction." In that article, General Gerasimov urged the Russian professional military thinkers to study the past and the current strategic and operational environment and produce new doctrine and tactics to win the wars of the future, because the rules of engagement had dramatically changed. For example:

¹⁵⁸ Isachenkov.

¹⁵⁹ Nichols, 30.

In the 21st century we have seen a tendency toward blurring the lines between the states of war and peace. Wars are no longer declared and, having begun, proceed according to an unfamiliar template. The experience of military conflicts—including those connected with the so-called colored revolutions in north Africa and the Middle East—confirm that a perfectly thriving state can, in a matter of months and even days, be transformed into an arena of fierce armed conflict, become a victim of foreign intervention, and sink into a web of chaos, humanitarian catastrophe, and civil war. The role of nonmilitary means of achieving political and strategic goals has grown, and in many cases, they have exceeded the power of force of weapons in their effectiveness....The broad use of political, economic, informational, humanitarian, and other nonmilitary measures....is supplemented by military means of a concealed character, including carrying out actions of informational conflict and the actions of special operations forces. The open use of (conventional) forces—often under the guise of peacekeeping and crisis regulation—is resorted to only at a certain stage, primarily for the achievement of final success in the conflict.¹⁶⁰

The general understands the realities of the present and the advantage the West's armed forces possess over the Russian forces, therefore he advocates for a different approach, encompassing the non-conventional, semi-military ways and uses them in a proportion of 4:1 in relations to the classic conventional assets. The hybrid ambiguity, subversion, propaganda, cyberattacks or population manipulation are great venues that can target enemy critical vulnerabilities and avoid direct unbalanced confrontation. This philosophy looks like a revival of partisan techniques, with modern means.¹⁶¹ And it also looks very similar with Mao's ideas of people's war.¹⁶²

¹⁶⁰ In Moscow's Shadows, "The 'Gerasimov Doctrine' and Russian Non-Linear War," accessed February 12, 2017, <https://inmoscowsshadows.wordpress.com/2014/07/06/the-gerasimov-doctrine-and-russian-non-linear-war>.

¹⁶¹ Connell and Evans, 3-4.

¹⁶² David Lai, *Learning from the Stones: A Go Approach to Mastering China's Strategic Concept, Shi*, vi-6, Carlisle, PA: Strategic Studies Institute, US Army, 2004.

A change in perspectives happened at the lower levels as well. Professional Military Education (PME) reforms mentioned in the Training subheading earlier were meant to improve the education system and the quality of the graduates. One of the biggest challenges was to train a new, professional non-commissioned officer' corps. Leadership will remain the domain of the officers, focused more on humanities and sciences disciplines while the non-commissioned officers should gain more knowledge on the technical field, maintaining a higher level of combat readiness.¹⁶³ To conclude, Russia does not desire to create enlisted leaders, it simply wants enlisted technical specialists.

Personnel

A way to examine the personnel situation in the Russian armed forces is to compare the heritage of the force, the challenges it faces and the ongoing status of the engaged reforms. The personnel heritage consists of a large mass conscription system, partially unmotivated and untrained. This system slowly evolved into a mixture of enlisted conscripts, recruited for one year and professional non-commissioned officers, specialized in technical fields and combat tactics. A complete transition towards a full professional enlisted corps is impossible momentarily due to the subsequent economic implications, but Moscow's leaders did not even want to reach that goal, since the present

¹⁶³ U.S. Army War College, Project 1704, 58.

system seems to provide a certain amount of military skills for the average citizen that might be useful in case of a partial or total mobilization.¹⁶⁴

The challenges for Russian personnel policies rises from the poor training and economic ambiguity of the country. Conscription is a decent way to man the force, but it is not a sustainable long-term strategy, especially when Russia faces demographic problems. Even more, from the remaining human resources basin, the majority of the population is not fit for the military. A 2010 study showed that from 400,000 high school graduates, only one third passed the standards for service.¹⁶⁵ Today reality shows a minority of Russian exceptionally proficient troops compared to the rest of the force. To even the training level will require a significant amount of resources, especially time, which does not resonate with the Kremlin leader's ambition and impatience.

There are hopes in Moscow that some of the ongoing reforms will solve these issues. The conscription system is declining and there are efforts to improve the living standards in garrisons. At the same time, Russia is trying to create a reserve force to compensate the population average level of military skills needed in case of mobilization. Furthermore, the security laws passed by the president in 2012 to increase the military

¹⁶⁴Lester ,W. Grau and Bartles, K. Charles, "The Russian Way of War—Force Structure, Tactics, and Modernization of the Russian Ground Forces," *Foreign Military Studies Office* (2016): 36.

¹⁶⁵ Rod Thornton, "Military Modernization and the Russian Ground Forces," accessed April 22, 2017, [https://books.google.com/books?id=li1vhOpzuBoC&pg=PA48&lpg=PA48&dq=Nikolai+Poroskov,+%E2%80%9CDraft+Obsession,%E2%80%9D+Vremya+Novostei+\(2010\):&source=bl&ots=hfGgLPiTOB&sig=s0Yw_Upr_CcyulmYr6SBL252xA4&hl=ro&sa=X&ved=0ahUKEwjX7onT9bjTAhUp0YMKHUTHDOYQ6AEIIZAA#v=onepage&q=Nikolai%20Poroskov%2C%20%E2%80%9CDraft%20Obsessi on%2C%20%E2%80%9D%20Vremya%20Novostei%20\(2010\)%3A&f=false](https://books.google.com/books?id=li1vhOpzuBoC&pg=PA48&lpg=PA48&dq=Nikolai+Poroskov,+%E2%80%9CDraft+Obsession,%E2%80%9D+Vremya+Novostei+(2010):&source=bl&ots=hfGgLPiTOB&sig=s0Yw_Upr_CcyulmYr6SBL252xA4&hl=ro&sa=X&ved=0ahUKEwjX7onT9bjTAhUp0YMKHUTHDOYQ6AEIIZAA#v=onepage&q=Nikolai%20Poroskov%2C%20%E2%80%9CDraft%20Obsessi on%2C%20%E2%80%9D%20Vremya%20Novostei%20(2010)%3A&f=false).

payments, to make the retirement benefits more attractive, and to promote the personnel housing priority, had positive effects.¹⁶⁶ It is a long journey ahead, but the Russian military has already traveled a long way.

Facilities

The Ministry of Defense public statement from March 2015 states not only the priorities for new equipment acquisitions but also it lists the facilities in which the Russian government must invest in the future.

By far, the Arctic region is the main focus in terms of funding new military settlements. The need to make “quality adjustments” to strategically important regions since Russian Federation is the second priority after the funding of Strategic Nuclear and Aerospace Forces. The huge amount of resources presumed to exist in the area and the melting speed of the northern ice cap, motivate the Kremlin to militarize the territory to gain a position of advantage in the future negotiations. In the meantime, in the Kara, Barents and Bering Seas, sea ice cover remains at record low levels, which encourages the Russian to pursuit with their strategy to create a military infrastructure and to deploy the Arctic subunits on the Novaya Zemlya Archipelago, Kotel’nyy, and Vrangeli Islands.¹⁶⁷

Another line of effort is the consolidation of the Russian troops’ situation in Crimea, upgrading primarily the Sevastopol garrisons. Same priority is allocated for the Kaliningradskaya Oblast, the modernization of Kaliningrad enclave facilities. It is highly

¹⁶⁶ Nichols, 30.

¹⁶⁷ Thomas, 129.

probable that in the future, the Russian facilities from Syria, Tartus naval base and Kmeimin Air base, to capture Russian authorities' attention.

In conclusion, the Russian leaders use the military tool mainly to intimidate and to enforce the political will of the Kremlin. Although operational and tactical levels during conflicts that involved Russian military had numerous lapses, Russia won the strategic stakes. Moldova, Georgia, Ukraine did not joined Western organizations, Chechnya did not break away, NATO enlargement stagnated, US softened the tone and accepted the new Russian status, the influence in the Middle East increased, Ukraine is not in the news anymore, and in the European capitals there are voices questioning the economic sanctions. These are the results of the Russian foreign affairs strategy, a combination of aggressive military force with assertive political policies, expressed by skillful diplomatic efforts and supported by effective informational campaigns.

Russian Foreign Affairs Fundamentals and Goals

In Russia, Vladimir Putin's views are usually not a subject to contradiction at the political levels, in academia or in the media news and programs. His influence on national policies is massive and decisive, therefore in many domains, his beliefs were soon transformed in state policies. Foreign affairs is no exception either. Since the Putin era began, the focus of those policies was to restore the Russian international prestige and its dominance over the former USSR area. The highest motivation was to overcome the West's efforts, especially the US, of undermining and humiliating Russia by taking advantage of the weakness confusion of the 1990s.¹⁶⁸

¹⁶⁸ Nichols, 38-39.

There were many signs of the evolution of Vladimir Putin's views and perceptions about external influence on Russia that shaped the Russian foreign affairs approaches. In 2007 at the Munich security conference, he announced that the West must be more sensitive to the Russian needs and demands. In 2008 at the Bucharest NATO summit, right after recognition of the Kosovar independence, he warned about the dangerous consequences that the Georgian and Ukrainian trajectories towards Western sphere of influence might cause. He perceived NATO enlargement as the main threat to the Russian interests and his desire to reestablish its rightful place in the world, therefore he opposed Moldovan, Georgian or Ukrainian accession to NATO or EU. Moreover, to maintain its presence in the Balkans, he tried to influence Macedonian as well as Montenegrin governments away from the Western organizations. He suspended the compliance with the Conventional Armed Forces in Europe Treaty because of the BMD system development. Since 2014, his collaboration with the international community in terms of security cooperation diminished drastically.¹⁶⁹ Systematically, these political declarations transformed into facts, as demonstrated by the actions in Estonia, Ukraine, Syria, and Kaliningrad or even in the Arctic zone.¹⁷⁰

A thorough analysis of the Russian Foreign Affairs spectrum reveals the existence of two major school of thoughts in Russia that might look contradictory but they actually complement each other and if necessary, confuse the external audience. The first one is the soft attitude of Russia towards the world in general and the West in particular. The

¹⁶⁹ U.S. Congress, Statement of General Philip Breedlove, 4.

¹⁷⁰ Nichols, 38-39.

first approach is praising Russia as a freedom-loving country, ready to cooperate with anybody willing to accept its status and interests. It states that cooperation with the West in areas such as Syria, Ukraine, Afghanistan and Iraq is not only necessary but also critical because the West alone failed in securing these states.¹⁷¹ The second approach is the hard attitude regarding the achievement of Russian international objectives. According to this stance, Russia must act strongly to challenge the US and the West, and to consolidate the relations with China and other regional powers from Asia, Africa or South America. It considers pressure on former Soviet states a natural sign of strength and any negotiation with the West, a sign of weakness.¹⁷² However, Vladimir Putin does not seem to be following any of these approaches, but rather he is trying to combine them in accordance with different situations and topics, in order to obtain maximum advantage.¹⁷³ His unique style in dealing with foreign affairs policies adjusted in time under the effect of a combination of several aspects such as his personal ideological beliefs originated in different Russian philosophers views praising the “Russian World” concept and his negative perception of the US strategies. Developments like Edward Snowden’s asylum request or the weak response of the Western powers to the Georgian or Ukrainian wars strengthened his beliefs and encouraged his behavior.¹⁷⁴

¹⁷¹ Zakem, Saunders and Antoun, 30.

¹⁷² Ibid., 31.

¹⁷³ Ibid., 32.

¹⁷⁴ Thomas, 371.

In November 2016, the Russian administration released the latest concept of Russian Federation foreign policy under the presidential approval. This document is important because it presents the Russian “systemic vision of basic principles” (the Ways) in its foreign policy, the “priority areas, goals and objectives” (the Ends) and some of the entities responsible to implement these methods (the Means). More important, the relevance of this conceptual document is greater because it describes the Russian foreign affairs philosophy and its recent viewpoint about the international order, the disposition of power and influence around the globe and the future challenges and opportunities.

Bottom line, Russia believes the time for a multipolar world order arrived, the development and use of force became imperative and the adaptation of influencing methods to the modern ages is essential. First, in the Russian Federation perception, the unipolar system with the US in a central role and the Western allies supporting its actions has ended due to Asian countries actions that systematically eroded the Western establishment, increasing disorders initiated by the disparity created between the West and the rest of the world, and the economic regional fragmentation as a result of a failed globalization supported by the West.¹⁷⁵

Secondly, the use of force became more and more a necessary measure to maintain world order because of the inefficiency of alliances in managing different regional crises, the risks posed by the incontrollable migration flows and the constant

¹⁷⁵ Russian Federation Presidential Administration, *The Foreign Policy Concept of The Russian Federation* (Moscow: approved by President Vladimir Putin, November 30, 2016), 2-6.

threat of the international terrorism and transnational crime.¹⁷⁶ Thirdly, the new realities and new technological advances cannot be ignored, therefore adapting to the modernized world is essential and offers innovative influencing ways. Today, economies have more pronounced impacts on population: Information Technology (IT) favored fast access to knowledge and diplomacy expanded its horizons by leveraging civil society organizations, humanitarian assistance entities and improved communication tools.¹⁷⁷

In the end, Russia maintains its defensive approach in foreign affairs in order to protect its compatriots, its interests and its role in the world.

Russia's foreign policy is open and predictable. It is characterized by consistency and continuity and reflects the unique role Russia has played for centuries as a counterbalance in international affairs and the development of global civilization.¹⁷⁸

In its view, Russia conducted a predominantly defensive foreign affairs campaign with isolated offensive actions that are not contradictory, but actually in accordance with overall intentions of Kremlin leaders. It challenged the West because it creates instability and disorder useful to its polemic leadership. It acted in Chechnya to stop a possible secession and protect the national territorial integrity. In Georgia and Ukraine, the Russians reacted to stop the NATO's aggressive and ambiguous expansion. Russia annexed Crimea because historically, it was the right thing to do, in Russian eyes, as Crimea belonged to the Russian czars for many centuries and the Crimean population

¹⁷⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷⁷ Ibid.

¹⁷⁸ Ibid., p. 22.

requested the reunification. Moreover, Sevastopol naval base was a strategic asset that could not be lost. The Syrian intervention was mandatory due to the thousands of Russian fighters that joined the terrorist organization Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) and maintain the risk of coming back home any time to create instability. Overall, President Putin sees himself as a defender of the present Russian status and a caretaker of Russian historical tradition to defend against Western aggressions, regardless if they were Swedish, French, German or possibly American.¹⁷⁹

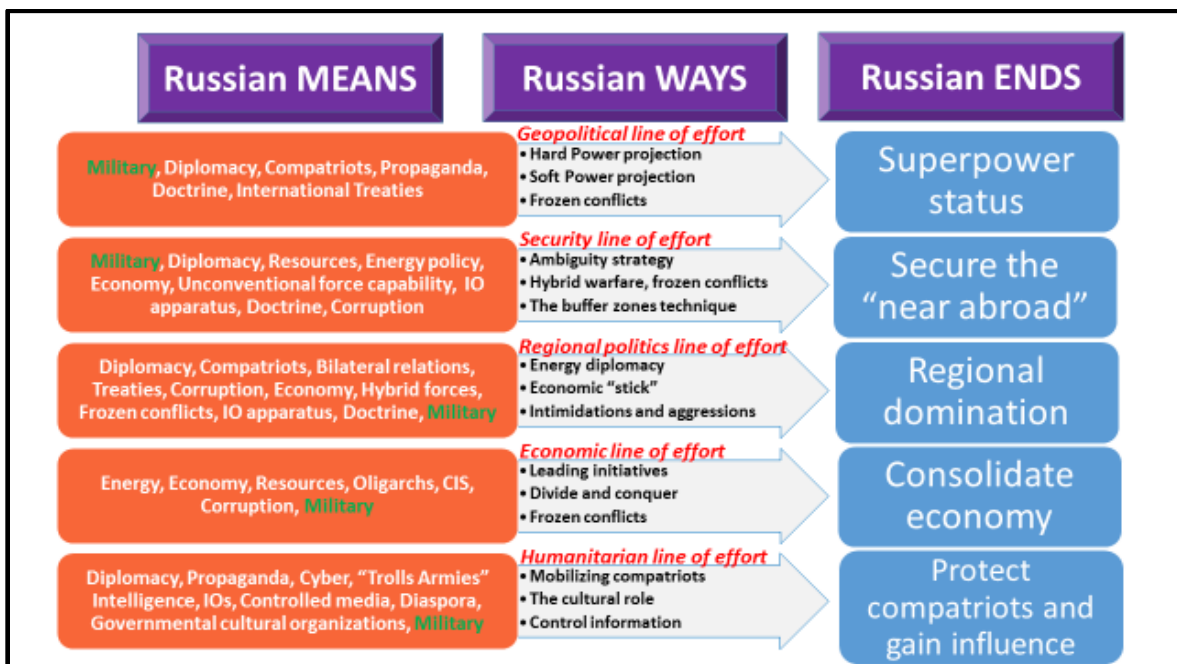


Figure 2. Russian Ends Ways Means correlation

Source: Created by author.

¹⁷⁹ Zakem, Saunders and Antoun, 26-27.

Ends, Ways and Means of the Russian Foreign Affairs

The Russian Federation concept about conducting foreign affairs clearly stipulates the external objectives in accordance with its interests and ambitions.¹⁸⁰ From the political viewpoint, Russia desires to gain a central position in shaping the international stage, to influence international peace by maintaining a position of advantage in any possible peace negotiations and to maintain its dominant relations over the neighboring states, once part of the USSR.¹⁸¹ To this end, Russia is following a two-step strategy — first to stop the NATO and Western expansion in former soviet territories and second to return to effective super power status.¹⁸²

From an economic perspective, Russia wishes to consolidate its global trading situation and strengthen economy, affected by latest sanctions.¹⁸³ On the informational side, the Kremlin wants to protect its citizens and expatriates inside or outside Russia and through their persuasion to protect its own interests, to gain a more significant role in international or at least regional culture and to dominate modern mass media tools in order to achieve effective communication.¹⁸⁴ In an interview on “60 minutes” show, Vladimir Putin stated that he wants to reconnect Russia with the Russians.

¹⁸⁰ Russian Federation Presidential Administration, *The Foreign Policy Concept of The Russian Federation*, 2-6.

¹⁸¹ Ibid.

¹⁸² U.S. Army War College, Project 1704, 72.

¹⁸³ Russian Federation Presidential Administration, *The Foreign Policy Concept of The Russian Federation*, 13-15.

¹⁸⁴ Ibid.

In an instant 25 million Russian people found themselves beyond the borders of the Russian state, although they were living within the borders of the Soviet Union. Then, all of a sudden, the USSR collapsed -- just overnight, in fact...And all of a sudden, they turned out to be outside the borders of the country. You see this is a huge problem. ...Do you think it's normal that 25 million Russian people were abroad all of a sudden? Russia was the biggest divided nation in the world. It's not a problem? Well, maybe not for you. But it's a problem for me.¹⁸⁵

Finally, the military is the ingredient that enforces this mechanism. Russia knows that due to the destructive capacity of nuclear weapons, the chances for an open high intensity conflict are reduced. However, Russia understands that a good military force and the threat it poses, can be, in many cases, enough to incline the balance in a desired direction. As previously discussed, the military modernization process is long and difficult but Kremlin also knows that sometime even the simulation of great capability can very well accomplish the mission.

Strongly influenced by the historical background, geography, economic and political relations, the Russian foreign policies faces many challenges. The US is not Goliath and Russia is not David anymore. The EU used to be and could still be the moneybag. China is a traditional enemy with a potential to become a clear partner. Ukraine and Belarus are two countries situated dangerously close to the Russian heart mainland. Georgia is the gate to the Caucasus resources and can offer a negative example to Azerbaijan in terms of its relations with Russia, while Armenia is seeking for protection. Finland and Moldova are necessary buffer zones while Turkey is an

¹⁸⁵ Charlie Rose, "Putin, Once a KGB Spy, Always a KGB Spy," In CBS News 60 Minutes Online Vladimir Putin Interview, accessed February 25, 2017, <http://www.cbsnews.com/videos/once-a-kgb-spy-always-a-kgb-spy/>.

opportunity. The Baltics are a lost cause for the moment but a good trading element in negotiations with NATO. Chechnya is a taboo subject while Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan and Turkmenistan are useful tools against terrorism and transnational crime. Everything else is a bonus.

This summarizes the strategic and regional context that Russia is trying to control through its policies. In the official foreign policy documentation, Russia mentions its “priorities,” the areas that the general efforts should concentrate in accordance with national interests. It starts with the need to strengthen the United Nations (UN) role and emphasizes its unique ability to impose sanctions and manage the rule of law in international relations. It continues with the way Russia can enforce international security by abiding arms control treaties and encouraging others to do the same, fighting terrorism and negotiating peace in the worlds’ hot spots. Russia wants to promote international economic cooperation with any partner that respects Russian interests. It respects the Paris Agreement regarding the environment protection and wants to delimitate the outer limits of its continental shelf to create new economic opportunities. It also suggests an increasing international humanitarian cooperation to protect the legitimate interests of Russian compatriots and to promote relationships between Slavic nations. At the same time, Russia will increase its information support to foreign policies activities in order to deliver accurate and unbiased information to international community and to Russian citizens, inside or outside the borders. Finally, the documentation refers to the importance

of the regional foreign policy, to develop bilateral and multilateral cooperation within former CIS and beyond.¹⁸⁶

Therefore, this official concept highlights the general Russian foreign policy strategy, establishing five main lines of effort to fulfill its objectives, the geopolitical, the security, the political, the economic and the humanitarian.¹⁸⁷

The main objective on the geopolitical line of effort was to reestablish the Russian superpower status. To accomplish this purpose, Russia used several ways such as the power projection and the world mediator role. In Syria, Russia demonstrated a certain level of capacity to project military capability overseas. Although limited, this fact demonstrated a reorganized and modernized military capacity and was a wonderful opportunity to show its force to the other major powers but more important to the regional powers and to its neighbors. Besides the military way, Russia conducted a highly sustained diplomatic campaign stating that it is the only viable alternative to fix the aspects broken by the West's "reckless" actions. It started the negotiations in Kazakhstan to conclude the Syrian conflict. It took the lead to solve the Afghan conflict together with other regional powers from the area. It also claims that is ready to cooperate with Kiev authorities to "help" them solve the Ukrainian internal conflict. In the same note,

¹⁸⁶ Russian Federation Presidential Administration, *The Foreign Policy Concept of The Russian Federation*, 17-26.

¹⁸⁷ Zakem, Saunders, and Antoun, 22-23.

Vladimir Putin recently met the newly elected Moldavian president and promised support to solve the long-lasting conflict in Transdnistria.¹⁸⁸

Another end was to stabilize and control the Russian near abroad through the security line of effort. To succeed, Russia employed different ways such as the hybrid warfare, the strategy of ambiguity and maintaining the buffer zone method. Moscow employed hybrid warfare to complete Crimean annexation, to support separatist movements in different countries, primarily in Ukraine and to leverage the so-called “frozen conflict” in the bordering areas.¹⁸⁹ The strategy of ambiguity is a broader concept around the hybrid approach design primarily to maintain internal stability and the current regime in power, but also to obtain different effects in the foreign policy. It encompasses a sustained Informational Operations campaign to feed Russian audiences in and outside the borders and to create instability in certain areas as needed in conjunction with the “big stick” array, a conventional military force deployed along the borders of the targeted area to intimidate and support the instability. This design assures Russia strategic flexibility in the following diplomatic approaches to lock their objectives.¹⁹⁰ The last way employed to secure the Russian “near abroad” is their creation of buffer zones, by exploiting ethnic divides and weaknesses of the victim states.¹⁹¹ To justify these actions,

¹⁸⁸ President of Russia, “Vladimir Putin and Igor Dodon joint news conference following the Russia—Moldova talks on January 17, 2017,” accessed February 26, 2017, <http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/53744>.

¹⁸⁹ U.S. Congress, Statement of General Philip Breedlove, 4.

¹⁹⁰ U.S. Army War College, Project 1704, 65.

¹⁹¹ U.S. Army War College, Project 1721, 102.

often Moscow uses the “blocking colored revolutions” rhetoric, a routine expression used to blame the West for orchestrating social unrest around the globe without discerning the consequences.¹⁹²

In recent years, we have seen how attempts to push supposedly more progressive development models onto other nations actually resulted in regression, barbarity and extensive bloodshed. This happened in many Middle Eastern and North African countries.¹⁹³

This technique was successful in Ukraine, Moldova and Georgia, but the loss of the Baltics and the doubts regarding the Finish intentions to join NATO, offers countervailing evidence of its effectiveness.

Another line of effort are the regional politics designated to accomplish the objective of Russian domination among its sphere of influence. It refers mostly to the interference in smaller neighbor’s internal affairs or in other countries as the opportunity arises, speculating certain flaws in the social system to produce insecurity and distress. The most preferred ways to intervene is the energy diplomacy, economic blackmail, and intimidation up to aggressions if necessary. Russian energy policy is mostly transcending the economic and trading framework, leveraging prices or shutting down the pipes to obtain favorable attitudes or to punish rebel behaviors, always backing up the diplomatic agenda.¹⁹⁴ Economic actions, especially trading, is a way to signal Moscow’s discontent

¹⁹² Zakem, Saunders and Antoun, 14-15.

¹⁹³ President of Russia, “Vladimir Putin’s Presidential Address to the Federal Assembly in December 12, 2013,” accessed February 27, 2017, <http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/19825>.

¹⁹⁴ U.S. Congress, Statement of General Philip Breedlove, 4.

with certain policies of satellite states whose economies rely heavily on the exports in the Russian Federation. The Center for European Policy Studies discovered that Moldova, Ukraine, and Georgia suffered heavily because of the Russian decisions to reduce the trading flows by blocking their exporters' access to Russian markets. At the same time, possibilities for sales in the EU were also limited due to the quality obstacles and overcoming strict technical standards.¹⁹⁵ When a situation is aggravated, Russian ways to intimidate and even abuse states' sovereignty is no longer a surprise. Just part of a long list of evidence to sustain the Russian tradition of a combined DIME intimidation include: actions in Ukraine, recognition of separatist's republics such as Abkhazia and Ossetia in Georgia, ethnics influence in the Baltics, the ZAPAD military exercises series, intercepting NATO aircrafts and shadowing NATO ships in international waters, strengthening basing capabilities from Kaliningrad to Belarus, to Crimea, to Syria, abandoning weapons reduction treaties and continuously addressing threats to NATO countries on the missile defense system topic.¹⁹⁶

The economic line of effort has the goal of consolidating and strengthening the Russian economy. The political ambitions of Putin's regime created many animosities among international community. Numerous analysts consider that Putin foresaw this outcome, but did not envision accurately the scale of it. As an example, after the Georgian intervention the economy seemed to be more reactive than the political domain.

¹⁹⁵ U.S. Army War College, Project 1704, 81.

¹⁹⁶ Ibid., 5.

The West could not provide a coherent response but the markets proved to be more sensitive.

Quite surprisingly for the Russian governing elite the intervention in Georgia generated a massive outflow of capital from the Russian market resulting in a huge drop of indexes on the Moscow Stock Exchange and depreciation of the Russian ruble. The outflow reached about \$130 billion at the end of 2008 and Russian attempts to stabilize ruble largely failed.¹⁹⁷

The ways Russia wants to achieve economic profits are the local control of the CIS, its regional economic organization to include former soviet countries, the expansion of international partnerships with other major economies of the world outside the West influence and using “divide and conquer” principle in relations with the US and the EU. CIS is a useful tool in maintaining the Russian status as a superpower capable to manage its proximity. Through CIS, Russia can control the Caucasus and Kazakhstan resources, the pipelines towards the European customers and it allows a certain leverage of the economic development of its members. However, Russia understood that gaining access to the big stakes of the worldwide economics would be possible only through solid partnership with important players like China. Therefore, the Kremlin made numerous efforts to increase cooperation within China, India, Brazil or South Africa (BRICS), a significantly more potent economic league. Meanwhile, Russia is speculating that possible friction will develop within EU or between the US and its European partners to

¹⁹⁷ Jacek Wieclawski, “Challenges for the Russian Foreign Policy—the Lesson of the Georgian Conflict,” accessed February 27, 2017, <http://search.proquest.com/docview/886544825?accountid=4444>, 15.

pursue bilateral agreements with the possible discontent members, as it happened with Turkey, Hungary, Greece or even Germany.¹⁹⁸

Finally, the last line of effort, and also the most complex, is referring to the Russian compatriots. In the Russian language, there are two different words to define a Russian, based on his origin. “Russkiy” refers to ethnic Russians while “Rossisskiy” refers to citizens of the Russian Federation.¹⁹⁹ The Moscow objective is to protect these populations and at the same time to gain influence over the host nation governments. To this end, Russia uses a combination of official diplomacy to promote and increase the Russian cultural role and a wide spectrum of information tools such cyber actions, propaganda and controlled media. State funded organizations work closely in conjunction with entities specialized in spreading the strategic narrative set by Kremlin. Cyber is also very appealing since it requires fewer resources and leaves no traces, as it proved its efficiency in 2007 at the presidential elections in Estonia, affecting transportation network during the Georgian conflict in 2008, hacking Ukrainian governmental websites in 2014, or interfering with the US presidential elections in 2016.²⁰⁰

In conclusion, Moscow’s ability to accomplish its strategic objectives resides in its leaders’ capability to project soft power, its new military capacity to project hard power, its talent in leveraging energy policies, its competence to control the domestic

¹⁹⁸ U.S. Army War College, Project 1704, 36, 80.

¹⁹⁹ Zakem, Saunders and Antoun, 3.

²⁰⁰ Ibid., 81.

population and the capacity to create instability by manipulating foreign ethnic Russians using its expert diplomacy and well-organized propaganda.

After the examination of the Russian strategic external policy objectives and the ways managed by the Kremlin to succeed, the investigation explores the means and resources available to support this design. In the 2016 Russian foreign policy capstone documentation, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs describes the institutions, processes and instruments that allows Moscow to leverage the international environment features in its favors.

The president of the Russian Federation nomination is at the top of the list. He is responsible to create and communicate his vision about the world and the role of the Russian Federation in the global context. Next mentioned are the Federal Assembly, the State Duma and the Russian government due to their task of creating and implementing the appropriate legislation to facilitate the presidential vision materialization. The Security Council has a significant role due to its duty to foresee and solve potential defense challenges. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs develops the strategy based on the president's intent and domestic legislation provisions and acts accordingly within the realm of international relations. To support this entire construct, several governmental organizations such as the Federal Agency for the CIS, Compatriots Living Abroad, and International Cultural Cooperation assist the Russian Foreign Ministry to conduct linear and synchronized international programs and humanitarian operations. In addition, the economic entities are resourcing and sometime even shaping the international environment to facilitate the unity of effort. In the end, the documentation acknowledge

the fact that “extra-budgetary resources raised on a voluntary basis through public-private partnerships can be used to finance foreign policy activities.”²⁰¹

Although the official sources presents a complete picture of the Russian organizational decision making hierarchy, this portrays only the tip of the iceberg of the Russian foreign affairs apparatus. Each of the ways presented in the previous subheading and grouped into several lines of effort requests a significant amount of efforts and resources. The military, usually employed in theaters of operations or used as an intimidation tool is probably the most important piece in the Russian strategy.²⁰² Diplomatic tasks are primarily to foment advantageous agreements or to conduct peace negotiations. The economy, the resources and the energy policy proficiently leverage results in luring or convincing current or future partners. The doctrine and legislation design focuses on easing the foreign affairs actions. Unconventional force capability spreads ambiguity and creates instability when needed. Information Operations (IOs) set up the background for upcoming events.²⁰³ Bilateral relations and international treaties strengthen Russian’s position on both regional and global stages. The manipulated compatriots can initiate unrest and opportunities for the Russian government and allows it to gain influence by intervening in the support of the “oppressed” population.²⁰⁴ Controlled media, propaganda and the “trolls’ armies” shape events and influence

²⁰¹ Russian Federation Presidential Administration, *The Foreign Policy Concept of The Russian Federation*, 26-28.

²⁰² U.S. Army War College, Project 1704, 75-76.

²⁰³ Ibid.

²⁰⁴ Ibid., 63.

segments of society in order to promote the Russian interests.²⁰⁵ The oligarchs form a shield of power around the Russian leaders facilitating the centralized control of the economy, preserve and maintain the power system and internal distribution of wealth.²⁰⁶ Spreading corruption abroad helps the Kremlin to dominate its sphere of influence by keep neighbors vulnerable, in terms of relationships. Frozen conflicts are perfect opportunities to uphold the so-called buffer zones around borders by blocking those nations' social evolution. All these assets, factors or concepts are valid and available means in the leadership's hands. The Russian mechanism expertly combines these necessary means to obtain the desired effects in each of the projected ends. If Romania or any other country from Russian vicinity understands how Moscow utilize their means in support of their ways to achieve their ends, it could successfully counter the effects of the Russian instruments of national power (DIME).

For Romania, knowing in detail Russian foreign policy is essential, if not crucial. The new emergence of Russia as a world superpower searching to expand its sphere of influence can affect the Romanian interests and the country path towards the European values and principles. The Romanian leaders must be able to shape the national strategies

²⁰⁵ Vitalii Usenko, "Russian Hybrid Warfare: What Are Effects-Based Network Operations and How to Counteract Them," *Euromaidan Press*, accessed February 28, 2017, <http://euromaidanpress.com/2014/11/05/russian-hybrid-warfare-what-are-effect-based-network-operations-and-how-to-counteract-them/>. The web brigades (Russian: Веб-бригады), also known in English media as the Russia's troll army, are state-sponsored anonymous Internet political commentators and trolls linked to the Russian government. Participants report that they are organized into teams and groups of commentators that participate in large-scale orchestrated trolling and disinformation campaigns.

²⁰⁶ Conlin and Stefanov, 24.

in accordance with Romanian interests, covering the gaps and vulnerabilities that might present any security hazards. However, this goal required a thorough analysis of the Russian foreign policy Ends, Ways and Means to accurately identify and address risks.

CHAPTER 5

IMPLICATIONS FOR THE ROMANIAN SECURITY ENVIRONMENT

Russian Application of the Instruments of National Power on Romania

The instruments of national power Diplomacy, Information, Military and Economic, also known as DIME, is a common framework to determine and analyze the influence of a state, union of states, coalition or alliance over another state or region in accordance with its interests and its capabilities. In US doctrine, DIME represents the ability of the US government to employ efficiently these instruments in the pursuit of its interests.

The ability of the US to advance its national interests is dependent on the effectiveness of the United States Government (USG) in employing the instruments of national power to achieve national strategic objectives. The appropriate governmental officials, often with National Security Council (NSC) direction, normally coordinate the employment of instruments of national power.²⁰⁷

The 1991 Gulf War changed the entire world's perception of warfare, due to its superb execution by the US military. After a decade of reforms, the US military redefined the Western way of war, deploying disciplined and well-trained soldiers, guided by a solid doctrine, ready to use new and sophisticated weapons systems and high technology

²⁰⁷ Joint Chiefs of Staff, Joint Publication (JP) 1, Doctrine for the Armed Forces of the United States (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, March 2013), I-12.

enablers.²⁰⁸ The new generation armored vehicles, the aviation precise support, the attack helicopters effectiveness, integrated fires and precision guided munitions, night vision devices, electronic-optics improvements, the Global Positioning Systems, all these hi-tech capabilities demonstrated the unchallengeable character of the US military. Even the most criticized component of the US Army, the logistics, demonstrated their outstanding ability to deploy large division formations in a short amount of time to significant distances.²⁰⁹ The Chinese, the Russians and other world and regional powers understood they had to reorient their efforts in order to avoid a direct military confrontation with the Western forces in their region. In 1999, two Chinese officers described the future of warfare as an ambiguous environment, more complex, more subtle, and more subversive. The military violence of warfare will decrease in the future while the economic and technological violence will increase in more extensive and yet concealed ways.²¹⁰ Therefore, they began to study the other letters of the DIME, the Economics in the case of the Chinese or the Diplomacy and Information in the case of the Russians, who observed the vulnerabilities caused by the insurgency and thought about possible ways to generate and control insurgency as a new, hybrid tool on the battlefield.

²⁰⁸ Colin S. Gray, "The American Way of War: Critique and Implications," in *Rethinking the Principles of War*, edited by Anthony D. Mc Ivor, 13-40. Annapolis, MD: Naval Institute Press, 2005.

²⁰⁹ United States Army, *War in the Persian Gulf* (Washington, DC: Center of Military History, 2010), 64-71.

²¹⁰ Liang Qiao and Wang Xiangsui, *Unrestricted warfare* (Beijing: PLA Literature and Arts Publishing House, 1999), 1-5.

The Russian government uniquely employs of these instruments. The first priority is Diplomacy, shaping the environment and testing the targeted area situation and perceptions. Based on an old, brilliant and skillful diplomatic school, Russian diplomacy proved its efficacy many times in history providing knowledge and valid options to the Kremlin. “Nuanced” interpretations of treaties justified their violation and the intrusions within other states sovereignty.²¹¹ In parallel with the diplomatic efforts, the Kremlin initiates the Information tool to spread the Russian narrative in the press, social media and internet channels, influencing its compatriots, local population, and ultimately the governance and its policies. Economic instrument of national power is an option leveraged by Moscow to enforce the constraints imposed to certain targeted groups or nations. Energy policy, also known as energy diplomacy or economic dependency are famous methods used to impose the Russian will. Finally, yet importantly, the Military instrument is significant in the Russian employment of DIME because it represent the intimidation tool, the “big stick” always present in the background to convince the negotiation partners at the table. The Military intimidation component goes two directions, one designated to remember the small nations the Russian power and the second one to challenge and deter other major powers ambitions.

Romania is a small nation compared to Russia. However, it is part of a major economic union and part of a major military alliance, NATO. Therefore, it must understand accurately the current context in order to translate the situation into feasible, suitable and acceptable (FAS) internal, regional and international policies. The position

²¹¹ U.S. Army War College, Project 1721, 104.

in these organizations brings a certain level of complexity. Therefore, Romania, must seize opportunities, manage the challenges, and consider the vulnerabilities. Eastern and Central Europe nations are still vulnerable after ten years from their integration in the Western organizations. Some countries are still challenging liberalism and have a strong orientation towards autocracy, others have tried to impose restrictions on press freedom or human rights, while some are still struggling with the communist inherited corruption, rule of law legislation, judicial independence obstructions and deformation of the electoral processes.²¹²

The current situation constitutes the perfect environment for the Russian interference to maximize the effects of their DIME employment in the Eastern Europe region. In 2009, the US President Barrack Obama received a letter signed by Eastern and Central European leaders to signal the increasing and disturbing Russian influence in their countries: economic warfare, energy blockade, political investments, and media manipulation that contest their Western orientation and trajectory. Indeed, Russia is doing ample efforts to discredit Western culture and its values, attitudes and beliefs. Through diplomacy, it tries to erode the emerging democracies existing in the region by encouraging the Euro-skeptics' movements, congratulating the Brexit adepts and emboldening other nations to follow the example, mocking capitalism, promoting illiberalism and endorsing organizations sponsored from Moscow.²¹³ Economically, besides the energy and imports-exports preferential policies, Russia is trying to develop a

²¹² Conlin and Stefanov, V.

²¹³ Ibid., IX.

non-transparent network of investments and patronage to allow the Kremlin leaders the control those economies. Therefore, the European parliament, following a German initiative, tried to enforce anti-corruption measures and review the investments plan in some of the Eastern Europe countries.²¹⁴ The Information domain is critical in implementing the disruption strategy in Eastern Europe. Some countries have significant Russian ethnics in their territories, others have to face only the propaganda oriented towards their local population. However, regardless of the demographic components, the Russian information tool is a critical asset to disturb the internal governance coherence and spread mistrust among the people and the international partners.²¹⁵ These objectives are enforced by the Military element. Russia scheduled a long list of military exercises along its Western border to respond the NATO Atlantic Resolve Operation.²¹⁶ The exercises, the frozen conflicts in Transdnistria and Eastern Ukraine, and the Kaliningrad enclave militarization are the supporting efforts to the Russian strategic goals.²¹⁷

In conclusion, Russia is combining the effects of these instruments to accomplish its objectives and to take advantage of any cracks in the Western establishments. All the trends discovered in Eastern Europe are applicable to Romania as well, so it is imperative

²¹⁴ Ibid.

²¹⁵ Ibid.

²¹⁶ U.S. Congress, Statement of General Philip Breedlove, 10.

²¹⁷ Neil MacFarquhar, "Russian Enclave Seen as a Fault Line of East-West Tensions," *New York Times*, accessed April 22, 2017, https://www.nytimes.com/2016/04/17/world/europe/russias-separate-piece-sets-off-alarms-about-a-cold-war-revival.html?_r=0.

for the leaders from Bucharest to acknowledge the threat and act to counter the effects of the Russian application of DIME.

Diplomacy

There is a long history between the Russian and the Romanian nations' relationships, sometime with positive and beneficial moments for both parties and other times with painful and regrettable aspects. The European context and interests always influenced the politics and diplomacy. By the seventeenth century, Russia consolidated its position as a major European power while Romania declared its independence in 1877 from the Ottoman dominance at the end of the Third Crimean War. In October 1878 the Romanian King Carol I received an accreditation letter from the baron Dmitri F. Stuart emphasizing the great military collaboration between the two armies on the recent war. One month later, the general Iancu Ghika sent a telegram from St. Petersburg to Bucharest stating that the Czar Alexander II "graciously welcomed him" as an official representative of Romania and had "only praising words" about the Romanian King Carol I. Russia was the second state after Austria in September 1878 to recognize Romanian Independence.²¹⁸

The good, mutual relations continued up to January 1918 when interrupted because of the Bolshevik Revolution's impact on the First World War. For a brief time, the bilateral relations reinitiated from June 1934 to June 1941 when Romania, a German ally at the time, was part of the famous Operation Barbarossa. After the war, in August

²¹⁸ Ion Bistreanu, "135 Ani De Relații Diplomatice Româno-Ruse," *Magazin Istoric*, accessed March 4, 2017, <http://www.magazinistoric.ro/135-ani-de-relatii-diplomatice-romano-ruse-3099/>.

1945, the two countries established embassy-level relations within the communist umbrella. In 1955, Romania joined The Warsaw Pact, but later refused to allow military maneuvers on its soil and limited its participation in military maneuvers elsewhere within the alliance. After 1991, the USSR representation became the Russian Federation.²¹⁹ The relations, however, followed a decreasing path due to Romania's orientation towards the European and North Atlantic organizations. The last important Romanian-Russian agreement lasted from 1991 and 1993, while the last significant official bilateral high-level meetings took place in 2003 and 2005. In 2002, Romania was officially invited to join NATO and the accession process was finalized in 2004. There was a stagnation period in 2006 and 2007, but after the Romanian official membership to the EU in January 2007, they constantly declined. The only major Russian visit to Romania was the presence of President Vladimir Putin at the NATO summit held in Bucharest, in April 2008. Since then, the efforts to recast bilateral connection were mostly timid on both sides for several considerations.²²⁰ The most important topics of the recent diplomatic engagements and negotiations are the Ballistic Missile Defense System (BMD) and NATO bases, the Black Sea cooperation theme, the frozen conflict in Transdnistria, the historical issue of the Romania national treasury and other routine political statements regarding internal political and economic aspects.

In May 2016, the NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg presided over a ceremony to mark the operational activation of the BMD system at the Deveselu air base.

²¹⁹ Romanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, "Homepage," accessed March 4, 2017, <http://www.mae.ro/node/4505>.

²²⁰ Ibid.

The 800 million dollar program was a permanent topic for disagreement between the Russian, US, NATO and Romanian officials throughout the last seven years since the challenges of this project became public. Although initially designed to include Spain, Turkey, Poland and Czech Republic facilities, eventually Romania replaced the Czechs in the project scheduled to finish in 2018 with the Polish component. During the project's construction, Russia contested its declared purpose to protect the US and its allies from any nuclear aggression initiated by rogue states such as Iran or North Korea. The U.S. Deputy Defense Secretary Robert Work said, "As long as Iran continues to develop and deploy ballistic missiles, the US will work with its allies to defend NATO." However, the Kremlin considers the "anti-missile shield" a tool to intercept the Russian nuclear ballistic missiles that could target US which will allow the Americans the strategic advantage of striking back. Therefore, because of the US pursuit with the shield, President Vladimir Putin and Prime Minister Medvedev warned the US, NATO and Romania that Russian military would develop capabilities to counter the BMD system effects, increase the defense capacities in Kaliningrad and along its Western borders and other retaliation measures against the system host nations.²²¹ This issue is also a continuation of an older disagreement regarding the buildup of the new NATO bases in Romania, Poland and other new member states' territory. Russia judged this situation as a violation of the NATO-Russia Agreement and December 1998 NATO Declaration.²²²

²²¹ Robin Emmott, "U.S. activates Romanian missile defense site, angering Russia," *Reuters*, accessed March 4, 2017, <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-nato-shield-idUSKCN0Y30JX>.

²²² Victor Roncea, "Sergey Lavrov Interview," *Victor Roncea Blog*, accessed March 4, 2017, <http://roncea.ro/tag/sergei-lavrov/>.

These diplomatic messages were repeatedly restated through media channels by different officials from the Russian Minister of Foreign Affairs starting with the Ministry Sergey Lavrov and other different Russian representatives including the Russian ambassadors to Romania. In parallel, the same messages transferred to the Information instrument of national power in a more nuanced version, with the only purpose to create fear and uncertainty among the Romanian population and to weaken its support to NATO.

The Black Sea is another common topic on the Russian-Romania official discussions. For many years, the influence over the commercial and military traffic opened numerous controversies. Today, Russia considers the Black Sea a strategic area relative to its national interests. Economically, the Organization for Black Sea Economic Cooperation is the main tool to regulate commercial relations between its members. This initiative started in 1992 and included twelve states from the Black Sea area. From 1994, its main office has been located in Istanbul.²²³ Militarily, Russia's rhetoric on this topic refers to increase the role of the Black Sea Naval Force organization, also known as BlackSeaFor or the Black Sea Naval Cooperation Task Group, to counter terrorism activities and weapons of mass destruction traffic.²²⁴ This is a subterfuge to block the presence in the Black Sea of other non-Black Sea naval warships, especially US and

²²³ Organization of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation, "Black Sea Economic Cooperation at a glance," accessed March 4, 2017, <http://www.bsec-organization.org/Information/Pages/bsec.aspx>.

²²⁴ Hurriyet Daily News, "Black sea countries to sign Blackseafor agreement Monday," accessed March 4, 2017, <http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/black-sea-countries-to-sign-blackseafor-agreement-monday.aspx?pageID=438&n=black-sea-countries-to-sign-blackseafor-agreement-monday-2001-03-28>.

NATO allied vessels.²²⁵ Russia considers the maritime exercises held by NATO forces in the Black Sea, a violation of the Montreux Convention.²²⁶ The main objective of Russian diplomacy on this matter is to proliferate ambiguity and to create dissensions between the Black Sea countries, some of them NATO members and other candidates for European integration.

Another important subject is the frozen conflict of Transdnistria, in the Republic of Moldova. Romania and Russia, along with all parties involved in this divergence agree that the situation must be resolved, but the resolution differs. While Russia militates for a federalization solution of the Republic of Moldova that will better protect its compatriots, Romania supports the US and European answer for a national reconciliation without a direct Russian military or political interference.²²⁷ However, Romania is not an official part of any negotiations.²²⁸ Therefore, its support is more moral and strictly diplomatic, and it has deep historical roots due to the close ties with its North-Eastern neighbor.²²⁹ Russian diplomacy skillfully leverage this topic to remind the Romanian population that

²²⁵ Roncea.

²²⁶ Global Security.Org, “Montreux Convention 1936,” accessed March 4, 2017, <http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/naval-arms-control-1936.htm>.

²²⁷ Igor Botan, “Procesul de negocieri ca modalitate de amanare a solutionarii problemei,” in *Moldova – Transnistria: procesul de negocieri*, ed. Denis Matveev et.al., (Chisnau: Cu drag, 2009), 25-26.

²²⁸ The format includes the Republic of Moldova and Transdnistria representatives, Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), Ukraine, the Russian Federation and since 2005, the EU and the US as observers.

²²⁹ Mihai Statie, “The Hot Nature of a Frozen Conflict,” Monograph, School of Advance Military Studies, Ft. Leavenworth KS, 2013, 21-25, 43.

Republic of Moldova will remain a buffer zone against NATO enlargement and a living testimony of the Russian influence and power in the region.

The Romanian national treasury is a sensitive, historical topic that will remain in the Romanian society conscience for many years. Following the French example of sending its national thesaurus to the US, the Romanian authorities decided to send theirs to Moscow, since the London option seemed riskier at the time due to the German submarine actions. Handed to the Russian authorities for safety reasons during the First World War, this national treasure containing public symbols, gold (91.2 tones in coins and 2.4 tones in ingots), artifacts, valuable national documents and works of art from prestigious Romanian and international artists was confiscated in 1918 as a result of the Bolshevik Revolution. According to Cristian Păunescu, the chancellor of the Romanian National Bank governor, thesaurus gold added to the gold reserves Romania owns today would have brought the country to 13th place in the world, almost 20 places higher than it is today, and right after the European Central Bank.²³⁰ The Kremlin returned parts of it in 1935, 1956 and 2008 as a sign of the Russian benevolence but the majority remained unreturned. In 2003, Romania and Russia finally signed a Friendly Relations and Good Neighborhood Agreement after 11 years of negotiations and one year later, based on that agreement, the two countries nominated a mixed Romanian-Russian committee of historians to establish the national treasury inventory. The committee scheduled annual meetings but in 2013, the Russians stopped participating in the investigations. However, in March 2016, relations were reinitiated and the committee met again in the Romanian

²³⁰ Evz.ro, “Aurul, miză mare pentru investitori,” accessed March 4, 2017, <http://www.evz.ro/aurul-miza-mare-pentru-investitori-927669.html>.

town of Sinaia. The next meeting will take place in Moscow, during the second half of 2017.²³¹ In a debate organized by the Frontline Club Bucharest, professor Armand Gosu and the diplomat Ion Bistreanu were very pessimistic regarding the future Romanian chances to recover anything because there are no more Romanian specialists in the Russian policies, there are no records for the melted and sold gold by the USSR, and because there is no international support for this topic.²³² The Russian authorities never denied the treasury's existence, but in time, they found different justifications to obstruct this process, in a show of force, intimidation, even arrogance gesture that conducted to an increasing anti-Russian perception among the Romanian population.

The most visible entity of the diplomatic relations in Bucharest is, naturally, the Russian Embassy. Recently, media covered an increasing number of events and appearances of the Russian Ambassador Valery Kuzmin on three types of topics. The most common is the economic approach, the latest was a criticism of some internal policies while the most surprising was a cultural initiative.

The Ambassador emphasized the former tight economic relations of both nations and said the authorities are working to organize future economic forums in Moscow and

²³¹ Curs de Guvernare, "MAE Anunță Reluarea Discuțiilor Privind Recuperarea Tezaurului de la Moscova," accessed March 5, 2017, <http://cursdeguvernare.ro/mae-anunta-reluarea-discutiilor-pe-tema-recuperarii-tezaurului-de-la-moscova-urmatoarea-reuniune-pest-un-an.html>.

²³² Actual.24, "Concluzie: Tezaurul Romaniei din Rusia Nu va fi Recuperat Niciodata," accessed March 5, 2017, <http://www.aktual24.ro/concluzie-tezaurul-romaniei-din-rusia-nu-va-fi-recuperat-niciodata-iliescu-marele-vinovat/>.

other Russian cities to benefit of both nations, without any interference of politics or ideology in the commercial aspects.²³³

Regarding the latest internal political developments in Romania and especially the recent popular anti-corruption protests in Bucharest and all major cities from January 2017, the Kremlin criticized the Romanian authorities in a surprising attempt to promote instability and gain some popularity in a generally antagonistic society. The Russian Foreign Affairs Minister message stated that Romania officials concentrated too much to create an anti-Russian perception and they forgot to listen its own population.²³⁴

Finally, the Russian desire to intensify the cultural exchange between the two nations could be an objective along the same line of effort. In February 2017, in an interview for a Romanian newspaper, the ambassador Valery Kuzmin announced Russian intentions to celebrate 140 years of diplomatic relations in 2018 by a series of cultural events to promote the common cultural heritage. He also stated that according to the new Russian diplomatic strategy called “the network diplomacy,” Russia could work very well on specific areas with countries that have, generally, different views. That means nations can leave aside aspects that separate them and focus only on the issues where they have common interests.²³⁵

²³³ Bogdan Bolojan, “Relații Economice România-Rusia. Ambasadorul Valery Kuzmin, Condiții,” *DCNews*, accessed March 5, 2017, https://www.dcnews.ro/rela-ii-economice-romania-rusia-ambasadorul-valery-kuzmin-condi-ii_534333.html.

²³⁴ Iulian Birzoi, “Rusia, îngrijorată de protestele din București,” *Adevarul*, accessed March 5, 2017, http://adevarul.ro/international/rusia/rusia-ingrijorata-fata-protestele-bucuresti-1_589f9db65ab6550cb862a82c/index.html.

²³⁵ Mircea Barbu, “Interviu Video cu Ambasadorul Federației Ruse în România, Valeri Kuzmin,” *Adevarul*, accessed March 5, 2017, <http://adevarul.ro/international/rusia/interviu-video-ambasadorul-federatiei-ruse-romania-valeri-kuzmin-Si-presedintele->

Information

From the Russian perspective, the Information warfare goes beyond the borders of a common propaganda activity or even some strategic communication lines of efforts. Along with Diplomacy, Information is critical to impose its will in present realities inside its internal society, around the region and around the world. The pattern includes gradually planned actions starting with official institutions, use of the compatriots abroad, public and private media, social media, corruption support and religious influence. Due to local specificities and conditions, the Russians are using a distinct recipe in Romania, tailored to the Romanian environment and its critical vulnerabilities.

The Russian governmental institutional design to influence the Romanian society are underdeveloped and not visible enough, mainly because of the significant differences between the Romanian Latin philosophy and the Slavic enforced ideology of the socialism era. However, the Russian Federation reiterated progressively some cultural ties through different entities, with a certain intensification after the Romanian integration in the EU. In 2007, by a presidential decree, Russia initiated “The Russian World” foundation, a cultural entity with offices in the top three Romanian university centers in Bucharest, Cluj and Constanza. Moreover, in 2011 and 2012 there have been celebrations of the Romanian cultural days in Russian cities of St. Petersburg, Moscow, Ekaterinburg and Velikii Novgorod. In 2013, the Romanian officials created The Cultural Institute at Moscow, while the Kremlin initiated The Russian Center for Culture and Science in Bucharest to expand collaboration in the fields of arts and sciences between the two

putin-dezincriminat-cateva-fapte-penale-caracter-minor-1_589bb7905ab6550cb847535e/index.html.

nations. For example, the teachers from the 24 Romanian schools that included the Russian language in the curriculum could study the Russian culture in a special program in Moscow.²³⁶

The Russian compatriots line of effort is not a factor in Romania, at least not in the classic way of the Ukrainian, Estonian or even Moldavian cases.²³⁷ In former USSR republics, the compatriots provide an opportunity to affect local politicians and their decisions and in the same time, they represent a great source of political, economic and even military intelligence.²³⁸ Because of that reality, Russia has to make significant efforts to shape the environment in the sense of “creating” the compatriots. These efforts include the official strategies displayed by its cultural organizations and more subtle ways of influence, to reach the older segment of the population, the communist nostalgic persons, or to create new groups of believers in the Russian solutions. A study by The Conflict Prevention Center showed that the Romanian acceptability towards the Russian citizens was relatively high (60 percent), towards the Russian Federation as a nation was

²³⁶ Romanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, “Homepage,” accessed March 4, 2017, <http://www.mae.ro/bilateral-relations/4506#783>.

²³⁷ According to the national Institute of Statistics, in October 2011 Romania had a population of 20.121.641 persons from which 23.500 declared to be Russian-Lipovenians ethnics, an old fishermen community residing mainly around the Danube Delta areas (15.900). The rest are located along the borders with Ukraine and Republic of Moldova. Available at http://www.recensamantromania.ro/wp-content/uploads/2013/07/REZULTATE-DEFINITIVE-RPL_2011.pdf

²³⁸ Zakem, Saunders and Antoun, ii.

balanced (40-45 percent), but the rejection of the Russian policies was extremely high (75 percent).²³⁹

In this context, the importance of the other disinformation tools is increasing, therefore, the media plays the most important role. The Russian mechanisms are using the state media to initiate the Kremlin distorted narrative and the private media controlled by Moscow to reiterate and proliferate the altered news.²⁴⁰ In Romania, Russian propaganda media centers such as *Russia Today* and *Sputnik* opened news websites to operate. Their main objective is to spread the fake news in accordance with the Russian goals on certain suggested themes. The hope is that the Romanian media will broadcast “the sensational” many times without a proper filtering process and via these channels insert into the Romanian society agenda, ideas and narratives to create a certain level of instability, an insecurity perception and support Moscow policies. As an example, during the Russian actions in Ukraine there has been a news spread by Russian propaganda, creating an invented separatist movement of the Romanian ethnics in Ukraine. They even cited the movement leaders, Dorina Chirtoaca and Cornelia Rusu, two fictitious characters who proved to be just a naming innovation to sound familiar for the targeted public (Dorin Chirtoaca is the mayor of Chisinau, the capital of Moldova, and Corina Fusu is a member of the Moldovan Parliament). The objective was disinformation — to create a dispute in the context of a strong Romanian support for the Ukrainian people in

²³⁹ Iulian Chifu and Oazu Nantoi, *Război Informațional Tipizarea Modelului Agresiunii* (București: Institutului de Științe Politice și Relații Internaționale Ion I.C. Brătianu al Academiei Române, 2016), 21.

²⁴⁰ Thomas, 384.

the crisis generated by Russian actions and to stimulate different marginal nationalistic parties in both countries.²⁴¹

The main themes identified in Romania as preferred subjects for the Russian propaganda are anti-Americanism, characterization of Romania as a US slave, anti-NATO rhetoric, the Ballistic Missile Defense System, and the EU collapse.²⁴² Although a socialist country for 45 years, Romania has proved to be faithful supporter of US policies supporter and a reliable NATO member in the last decades. Thus, the Russian propaganda concentrates on reminding the Romanian population of the US bombing campaign in the Second World War and creating the impression of a war between US and Russia in which the Americans want to force the young Romanians soldiers into the first line of the battle. These actions target the Romanian population in the hope of changing a generally favorable perception of the US, especially the US Army troops stationed on Romanian territory at NATO bases. At the same time, Russia is targeting also the local politicians and their decisions, blaming them for being too obedient to Washington imperialistic demands.²⁴³ NATO is described as an offensive organization created solely to promote the same imperialistic values of the West, ignoring the defensive character stated in its foundation declaration. Furthermore, this narrative continues to accuse NATO of using Romania as a buffer zone between its forces and Russia, for example by installing the BMD system components. On this theme, there are three distinct narratives.

²⁴¹ Chifu and Nantoi, 43-44.

²⁴² Ibid., 51.

²⁴³ Ibid., 53.

One refers to the Russian will and capacity to develop an effective weapon to destroy the Deveselu facilities if necessary and to frighten the population by describing Romania as a priority target on the Russian list. The second approach is describing the BMD system as inadequate to provide security for Romania, its only purpose being to protect the West and ignoring the fact that the system potential is limited (only 24 warheads compared with the hundreds from the Russian arsenal) and is geared towards defense of NATO against unpredictable states as Iran. The third approach is the legal venue, blaming the West of breaking the signed weapons treaties in the case of both the BMD system as well as the new troop deployments on the Eastern flank of NATO.²⁴⁴ The last significant theme is the future collapse of the EU due to incoherent leadership, excessive immigration and lack of solidarity between the Western and Eastern Europe nations, while the Russian solution is the best alternative and the most viable one. The narrative presents an apocalyptic view, with the EU and the US draining all the Romanian resources and in the end, leaving the country again in the Russian sphere of influence, in poverty and social distress. On the other hand, the Russian intentions can be only positive because, geographically, they will dominate the region and is in their best interest to maintain a prosperous and stable region.²⁴⁵

Besides these four themes, the Russian media is also ready to take advantage of any significant social, political or economic event that might offer an opportunity in influencing Romanian democratic establishment and the society. *Russia Today* and the

²⁴⁴ Ibid., 63-64.

²⁴⁵ Ibid., 67-68.

press agency *Sputnik* covered the January-February 2017 protests in Bucharest in detail. *Sputnik*, the successor of the former state official news agency *Ria-Novosti*, even started an online poll regarding the necessity for the Romanian government's resignation. The results showed the Romanian population did not want instability or a new government but just a necessary correction of a legal initiative. However, the intensity of the Russian state controlled media interference should be noted.²⁴⁶

Social media is also an area utilized by the Russians to influence the Romanian society and the demonstration is visible in the number and the quality of the “fake news” and of the comments over different topics on internet sites. The Russians are noted for their “trolls’ factories” and their ways of shaping the news and the perceptions.²⁴⁷ However, in the Romanian case the majority of the trolls seem to be Romanian because of the language skills and nuances used (only less than one percent of the postings are using improper grammar language). Some of the postings (5-10 percent) have nothing in common with the topic, just praising the traditional Russian benevolent attitude towards Romania or just reminding historical moments when Russia helped Romania.²⁴⁸

Other tools such as cyber-attacks, corruption support or even the Orthodox Church involvement are present, but very limited in scale and effects. Although not the main target on the cyber domain, Romania should prepare for any kind of aggression in

²⁴⁶ Dan Andronic, “Rusia se Amesteca in Protestele din Romania,” *Evz.ro*, accessed March 5, 2017, <http://www.evz.ro/rusia-se-amesteca-protestele-romania.html>.

²⁴⁷ Shaun Walker, “Salutin’ Putin: Inside a Russian Troll House,” *The Guardian*, accessed March 12, 2017, <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/apr/02/putin-kremlin-inside-russian-troll-house>.

²⁴⁸ Chifu and Nantoi, 38.

this domain. Although a country with significant corruption systemic problems, Romanian population is strongly committed to eradicate this social disease and more resistant in front of the politician manipulations. Although an Orthodox nation, the Romanian Church is an autocephalous Orthodox Church since 1866 when it broke from Constantinople and has limited implication in the political life of Romania or the Romanians.²⁴⁹

The existence of the Russian propaganda machine in Romania cannot be denied, nor neglected. Ed Royce, the Chair of the US Committee for the Foreign Affairs recognized its undermining effects on the democratic stability of the Eastern Europe young democracies, by promoting instability and frictions within their societies. A recent project developed by the Black Sea Trust of German Marshall Fund to create a typology measurement of the Russian Information tool, placed Romania at level 1, in a level 0 to 5 scale (0 being the most resistant society to the Russian influence). The influence is marginal even if the persuasion was present and the public space is well balanced.²⁵⁰ Romania was definitely part of this negative influence strategy and resisted the pressure, because ultimately, democracy provides also the key to counter these actions. Freedom of speech, freedom of association, freedom of research, creates the necessary environment for debates, which will finally led to logical argumentation, transparency, correct

²⁴⁹ Encyclopedia Britannica, "Romanian Orthodox Church," accessed March 12, 2017, <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Romanian-Orthodox-Church>.

²⁵⁰ Chifu and Nantoi, 83-84.

information and official communication to defuse tensions and provide accurate answers to the population and public exposure of to the intentionally distorted news.²⁵¹

Military

The Russian military instrument of national power, metaphorically known in history as a “hammer” always searching for nails became more sophisticated lately.²⁵² Historically, the Romanian Armed Forces and the Russian Red Army have a long common precedent, evolving from love to hatred relations, back and forth. At the end of the nineteenth century, the Romanian Army joined the Russian Imperial Army against the Ottoman Empire and as a result of the common victory, Romania declared its independence. The beginning of the First World War found the two nations in the same alliance and the friendship between the two ruling monarchies seemed to transfer the sympathy towards to military and the population as well. 1917 changed this paradigm as Russia changed its political system and abandoned the Romanian Army in front of the German and Austrian offensive. This situation evolved into a powerful discontent among Romanian population perceptions. The Ribbentrop-Molotov Pact decisively determined Romania to join Germany in the Second World War and to participate in the Operation Barbarossa, attacking the USSR in order to liberate the illegally annexed province of Bessarabia. After the war, the Russian Red Army occupied the Romanian territories until

²⁵¹ Ibid., 24.

²⁵² Michael Kofman, “A Comparative Guide to Russia’s Use of Force: Measure Twice, Invade Once,” *War on the Rocks*, accessed February 27, 2017, <https://warontherocks.com/2017/02/a-comparative-guide-to-russias-use-of-force-measure-twice-invade-once/>.

1958 to impose by force the installation of the communist regime. During the socialist era, Romania and Russia were military partners within the Warsaw Pact but the partnership between the two nations that existed before 1917 never recovered. Once Romania vehemently protested, in 1968, against the Soviet invasion of the Czech Republic, the USSR imposed a tacit regime of isolation against Romania. After 1991, the two nations reduced their direct political and military cooperation, especially after the 2004 Romanian integration into the North Atlantic alliance.

The Russian direct military influence on Romanian society is reduced. However, Russian military actions have a great impact on the NATO policies and subsequently on Romania because any influence the Russian Federation that applies to NATO is an influence on all members. The Georgian conflict was a powerful signal sent by Russia, but significant Western military reaction did not come until after the 2014 Ukrainian crisis. To deter the Russian aggressions, European Command (EUCOM) and NATO HQ decided to start the European Reinsurance Initiative (ERI), a mission led by the US forces to demonstrate its commitment towards its European allies and to strengthen the Eastern flank of NATO by redesigning its troops deployment locations, executing combined operations exercises with regional partners and conducting air patrolling and policing. Currently, the assurance mission is transitioning to deterrence because of the negative Russian influence in the region continues, while the US government allocated an additional \$3.4 billion in the fiscal year 2017 to accomplish this difficult task.²⁵³ Part of

²⁵³ Terri Moon Cronk, “European Reassurance Initiative Shifts to Deterrence,” accessed March 5, 2017, <https://www.defense.gov/News/Article/Article/839028/european-reassurance-initiative-shifts-to-deterrence>.

the program, Romania is actively participating in this initiative by increasing its training capacities, modernizing its training facilities, and joining to a wide range of military international exercises in order to raise its readiness status and to develop the interoperability level with its NATO and regional partners.

Besides the indirect influence, through the NATO channel, the Russian military conducts direct, low intensity, Information Operations (IO) activities on the Romanian territory. By US doctrine definition, IOs are one of the most effective methods to influence populations and the authorities.

The integrated employment, during military operations, of information-related capabilities (IRCs) in concert with other lines of operation to influence, disrupt, corrupt, or usurp the decision making of adversaries and potential adversaries while protecting our own.²⁵⁴

The intention is to create a favorable, even frightening image of the Russian Federation, a strong and powerful country capable of dealing with the US, NATO and all other Western threats to its national interests and ready to crush its opponents instantly if their behavior requires such actions. The military component of these operations is a replication of the more nuanced activities conducted through the Information tool.

Another indirect military influence is Russia's 14th Army presence in Transdnistria. It is influencing primarily the Republic of Moldova and secondarily Romania, as the main supporter for the European integration of its Northeastern neighboring country, due to the existence of strong historical, ethnic and cultural ties

²⁵⁴ Joint Chiefs of Staff, Joint Publication (JP) 3-13, Information operations (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, November 2013), I-1.

between the two states. Romania will promote the security cooperation with the Republic of Moldova and will continue to provide requested assistance for the Moldavian authorities based on the Romanian previous experience regarding the North-Atlantic and European integration.

To sum up, the Russian military influence is more visible in the political and military departments because of the Kremlin pressure on the Eastern flank of NATO, but it contains a significant slice of IOs as well, to ease and intensify the effects of the use of the other instruments of national power.

Economy

Romania is one of the most important economies from Eastern and Central Europe and a medium market of the EU, with an economic growth of 5 percent in 2016, the greatest in the EU, and a GDP (purchasing power parity) of approximately \$441 billion in the same year.²⁵⁵ The country has considerable natural resources including rich agricultural lands, diverse energy resources (coal, oil, and natural gas), and a significant industry based on a wide range of manufacturing activities.²⁵⁶ However, the Russian economic instrument of national power in Romania falls to a secondary position in comparison with the other tools and their effects on the Romanian society. On one hand, it looks like Russia did not want to commit more funds to invest in a country with no compatriots or a stronger Russian affiliation. On the other, as an EU member Romania is

²⁵⁵ The World Factbook, "Europe, Romania," accessed March 5, 2017, <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/ro.html>.

²⁵⁶ Country Watch, *Romania Review 2016* (Houston TX: Country Watch, 2016), 110.

under the control of Brussels legislation and that could raise difficulties for Moscow financial schemes. Whatever the case, the fact is that Russia holds the third place in non-EU foreign investments in Romania.²⁵⁷ In the energy domain, Romania has a privileged position that depends little on the Russian energy. Having its own petroleum and gas reserves (current internal production covers about 60 percent of the oil and 75 percent of the natural gas consumption, with an increasing potential), the imports from Russia are most of the times dictated by seasonal pricing opportunities rather than a permanent need for Russian resources.²⁵⁸ In January 2016, Romania imported only 5 percent of the natural gas needed for internal industrial consumption from Russia but in November 2016, the imports increased to 25 percent due to the Russian low-level prices.²⁵⁹

Treaties signed between 1991 and 1993 regulate the Romanian-Russian economic exchange while the economic relations between the two nations were moderate after the collapse of the communism. At the governmental level, there is only one mixed committee to enhance economic, technological and scientific cooperation. The commercial exchange balance shows that the bilateral economic agreements and trading activities developed with difficulty and dramatically dropped after crises such as the Georgian conflict in 2008 and the Ukrainian intervention in 2014. In July 2016 the

²⁵⁷ Romanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, "Homepage," accessed March 4, 2017, <http://www.mae.ro/bilateral-relations/4506#783>.

²⁵⁸ Country Watch, *Romania Review 2016* (Houston TX: Country Watch, 2016), 127.

²⁵⁹ Ziare.com, "Cum i-a cedat Romania Rusiei 25 la suta din piata interna de gaze," accessed March 5, 2017, <http://www.ziare.com/economie/gaz/cum-i-a-cedat-romania-rusiei-25-la-suta-din-piata-interna-de-gaze-mecanismul-suspect-care-loveste-si-in-buget-si-in-economie-1444355>.

declining trend maintained and the volume reduced overall with 18 percent, the exports 13 percent, the imports 19.9 percent and the exports 13.9 percent.²⁶⁰

Table 1. The Romanian-Russian commercial exchange balance

YEAR	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Total	4396,1	5000,0	5909,3	2810,9	3797,9	4343,9	4422,1	4986,77	4998,3	3309,91
Exports	374,1	582,8	897,7	716,3	1096,7	1417,0	1351,3	1839,69	1949,5	1102,41
Imports	4022,0	4417,2	5011,6	2094,6	2701,2	2926,9	3070,8	3147,08	3048,8	2207,5
Balance	-3647,9	-3834,4	-4113,9	-1378,3	-1604,5	-1509,9	-1719,5	-1307,39	-1099,3	-1105,09

-USD millions-

Source: Minister of Foreign Affairs, “Bilateral Relations,” accessed March 5, 2017, <http://www.mae.ro/bilateral-relations/4506#783>.

The recent economic sanctions imposed on Russia produced powerful effects in Moscow and its investments in foreign countries, its military programs and to its internal projects.²⁶¹ In the quest of finding new partners, Russia is trying to realign major powers outside the Western sphere of influence but also is attempting to discover opportunities within the EU economic circle, such as with Hungary, Greece, and Turkey. Regarding Romania, there are Russian offers for future collaboration in private or governmental projects but popular perceptions of Russian society and the cultural and ideological differences are obstacles difficult for Russia to ameliorate.

²⁶⁰ Romanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, “Homepage,” accessed March 4, 2017, <http://www.mae.ro/bilateral-relations/4506>.

²⁶¹ U.S. Army War College, Project 1721, 104.

Implications for the Romanian Security Strategy and Defense Policies

Significant change is one of the most important determinants of any operational environment. In the current European theater the high volatility atmosphere enabled a continuous changing process, starting with the breakout of the 2008 economic crisis, the new defense paradigm caused by the Russian actions since 2012, and the EU transformation spasms caused by the immigration and Brexit. In this context, adaptability is an absolutely necessary condition in order to maintain internal and external stability. For Romania in particular, the security environment requested at least an adaptation, mostly due to the increasing level of the Eastern threats, the immigration challenge and international organized crime networks. Although the legal framework existed, the Romanian authorities acknowledged the necessity of redesigning the institutional security structure, increasing the level of expertise in the security domain and compulsion to expand civil society's role in the security calculation.²⁶²

The international partnerships Romania joined are fundamental premises with essential impacts on the construct of the security doctrine and their effects, especially for the foreign affairs policies. NATO, as the most important military alliance Romania is part of, and the EU as a vital economic organization for the Romanian interests, are the first factors to determine the main lines of efforts in the security approach.²⁶³ The latter

²⁶² Romanian Presidential Administration, *The Romanian National Defense Strategy Guide* (Bucharest: Decree no.128 of The Romanian Supreme Defense Council (CSAT), December 10, 2015), 37.

²⁶³ Petre Duțu and Bogzeanu Cristina, *Strategia Militară a României în Contextul Noilor Repere Europene și Euro-Atlantice de Securitate* (București: Editura Universității Naționale de Apărare „Carol I,” 2011), 13-14.

one, besides its political, economic and social implications, it becomes more interested in developing a military component capable of maintaining peace and prosperity within its borders, preventing crisis and addressing regional conflicts.²⁶⁴ The European Security Strategy became a universal guide for all the EU members' security strategies.²⁶⁵ However, besides its allies, Romania sees the Russian Federation a significant consideration factor during the security policies building process. Challenging the international order, acting to disturb the stability within the Black Sea region and repeatedly ignoring the international laws transforms the Russian Federation into a potential high-risk actor that already affected Georgian, Ukrainian and Moldovan European integration itineraries.²⁶⁶

To address these new developments and new legislative requirements, the Romanian Presidential Administration issued *The Romanian National Defense Strategy for 2015-2019*. Furthermore, in December 2015, same officials released *The Guide of The Romanian National Defense Strategy for 2015-2019*, under the approval of the Supreme Defense Council (CSAT), to facilitate the strategy implementation of the strategy.²⁶⁷ These two official documents along with the Romanian internal and external security laws form the capstone security doctrine to guide the appropriate Romanian institution

²⁶⁴ High Representative of the EU, "Shared Vision," 45-46.

²⁶⁵ High Representative of the EU, "Joint Communication," 2-3.

²⁶⁶ Romanian Presidential Administration, *The Romanian National Defense Strategy for 2015-2019* (Bucharest: Romanian Presidential Administration, 2015), 12-13.

²⁶⁷ Supreme Defense Council (in Romanian: Consiliul Superior de Apărare a Țării-CSAT) is the top entity to ensure the organization and coordination of all defense institutions, in accordance with the Romanian Constitution.

actions in a cohesive line, stipulated in a *National Implementation Plan*, also initiated by the Presidential Administration, and subject of the Supreme Defense Council (CSAT) approval.²⁶⁸

The 2015 security doctrine introduces new concepts in the national defense community and legislation. It began with the overall purpose of the new strategy, to transform Romania into a strong country in Europe and beyond, ready to protect its citizens inside or outside its borders, able to pursue its interests and promote strategic credibility.²⁶⁹ Extended National Security is a new concept that refers to the expansion of this domain to include all political, economic and social actors of the society, to protect the Constitution, internal stability, rule of law, and citizens' freedom. National defense domain terminology defines more clearly the two main components, the internal defense as the sum of actions designated to maintain internal order and territorial integrity and the collective defense, as the contribution of the Romanian Armed Forces to the NATO efforts to preserve the sovereignty of its members. Hybrid threat concept refers to the ability of any state or non-state actor to create unrest and instability, combining conventional and unconventional means to accomplish its objectives. Strategic credibility is a concept to describe better the end state of the strategy design and comprises the continuity and predictability of the foreign affairs policies with a strong, consolidated internal democracy and uncontested rule of law. Lastly, protecting the compatriots inside

²⁶⁸ Romanian Presidential Administration, *The Romanian National Defense Strategy Guide*, 36.

²⁶⁹ Romanian Presidential Administration, *The Romanian National Defense Strategy for 2015-2019*, 3-4.

and outside the borders became also an important aspect of the Romanian strategic approach in the context of a constantly increasing diaspora mainly within the EU border as a result of the freedom of labor movement.²⁷⁰

The main internal objectives of the strategy are consolidating the Romanian capabilities to face the future challenges, protecting the critical infrastructure and the natural environment, protect the rule of law, freedom of justice and address the terrorist threats. Externally, Romania acts to: consolidate its NATO and EU role, protect the European values, preserve the strategic partnership with the US, ensure security of the Black Sea region, strengthen the Eastern flank of NATO, extend cooperation with neighboring states, and support Republic of Moldova European integration process.²⁷¹ The majority of these objectives implies a certain degree of interaction with the Russian Federation policies because of the intersection of interests, convergent or divergent.

Therefore, the main threats described by the strategy are the Eastern neighborhood destabilizing actions to cause instability, criminality, and massive migrations. The perpetuated frozen conflicts and inter-ethnic animosities in the Romanian proximity is creating supplementary pressure and tensions. Disturbances on the energy markets are critical to Romania's energy security. Cyber threats are new to the list of possible security risks along with terrorism, Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMDs), and, very important, Information Operations oriented to influence strategic policies and

²⁷⁰ Romanian Presidential Administration, *The Romanian National Defense Strategy Guide*, 7-9.

²⁷¹ Romanian Presidential Administration, *The Romanian National Defense Strategy for 2015-2019*, 9-10.

political decisions.²⁷² Again, many of the identified threats originate with Russian Federation policies and capabilities. Therefore, the most significant will be subject to the following objective-way correlation analysis.

To the end of strengthening democracy by ensuring the economic sound environment, rule of law and freedom of justice climate, Romania sees threat and associated risks in the Russian employment of the Information instrument of national power that sustains corruption within economic and political circles in order to gain control and influence decisions. Therefore, it tries to counter any possible influence by reinforcing justice institutions, human rights, property rights, stimulating education and healthcare reforms, counter demographic decrease, fighting corruption, improving business environment and facilitating Foreign Direct Investments (FDI).²⁷³ By acting along these directions, the authorities wants to reduce the population vulnerability to any destabilizing actions and to elevate the education level and the quality of life.

Another end is the consolidation of the regional and international role of the country. This end includes the increasing the role within NATO and EU, consolidation of the strategic partnership with the US, strengthening the Eastern flank of NATO, supporting the Moldovans European integration and promoting stability on the Black Sea region. Romania identifies several risks that jeopardize the current situation, among which the most important are the recent security developments in the Eastern proximity and the Russian Federation Black Sea fleet's increased capabilities. To mitigate those,

²⁷² Ibid., 14.

²⁷³ Romanian Presidential Administration, *The Romanian National Defense Strategy Guide*, 22-23.

Romania should commit to continue the interoperability process with its partners and its contribution to multinational operations and civil missions, extend bilateral cooperation with the US, promote cooperation in the security industry segment, and early identification and resolution of any possible terrorist or hybrid threats. Enhancing bilateral and trilateral agreements with neighboring countries is also a suitable approach to a sustainable regional stability.²⁷⁴

The risks associated with disturbances on the energy markets affects the objective of maintaining a constant economic growth. The Romanian authorities' intent is to avoid possible energy diplomacy effects and economic blockades, as part of the Russian toolbox, by promoting the strategic credibility, investments diversity, the European values, property protection laws, security information cooperation with similar entities from the Western partner nations, fighting corruption and prevent cyber-attacks. A robust diplomatic campaign is critical for an efficient support of the national economic interests.²⁷⁵

Another major concern is too protect critical infrastructure against terrorist attacks, cyber-attacks, IOs and economic projects with a subversive character oriented against national energy security. With the exception of terrorism, Russia possess the ability and the means to create instability through all the above-mentioned ways. Early warnings and identification of terrorist and hybrid threats is crucial to protect critical infrastructure. In addition, critical infrastructure must be developed and modernized but

²⁷⁴ Ibid., 24-26.

²⁷⁵ Ibid., 27.

any reported deficiencies must be the subject of a thorough analysis to identify possible cyber-attacks. Moreover, the balance between the energy consumption and production could be a valuable indicator of dysfunctionality. The solution is the energy diversification production, unimpeded access to resources and increased efficiency and interconnectivity by implementing the “Energy Union,” an EU project to connect more members to an energy intra-European network.²⁷⁶

Promoting national identity and culture and protecting Romanians citizens inside or outside the border is an important and sensitive objective due to increasing number of working population spread throughout the EU and because of Romanian citizens living in the Republic of Moldova. International criminality in the West and the frozen conflict of Transdnistria, in which the Russian Federation plays a significant role are also areas of concern. The main lines of effort to address these areas are the human rights protection for Romanian citizens and their free practice of their own culture, support of the educational and research projects developed, active diplomatic campaigns, and continuous communications with the representatives of these communities.²⁷⁷

Finally, to ensure its sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity, the Romanian leadership must consolidate defense capabilities. The main risks to this end comes from the instability initiated beyond the Eastern vicinity, the Black Sea region tensions, the frozen conflicts from near abroad, the Balkans problems and migration. With the exception of the last issue, all others have a direct or indirect link with the

²⁷⁶ Ibid., 28-30.

²⁷⁷ Ibid., 34-35.

Russian Federation sphere of influence. To stand against these threats, Romania intends to identify and counter hybrid activities, leverage efficiently NATO and Black Sea organizations, defense and stability mechanisms, and enhance the strategic partnership with the US. A vital condition is to continue the reorganization, modernization and equipping process of the Romanian Armed Forces to achieve the 2027 final transformation aim, by allocating constantly the minimum 2 percent of the GDP for military expenditure. Subsequently, the defense industry has to adapt to the new realities and expand cooperation with Western similar companies to support the increasing security demands.²⁷⁸

Looking specifically to the defense policies, the influences caused by the Russian actions translated into intensified training and exercises, but it did not resumed with the readiness elevation. A credible defense force should not only be properly manned, trained, but also equipped. Starting 2012, Bucharest's leadership adopted the political decision to raise constantly defense budget and expenditures. In 2017, the prediction is 2.38 percent of the GDP.²⁷⁹

²⁷⁸ Ibid., 28.

²⁷⁹ Romania-insider.com, "Romania's defense minister confirms defense spending will increase," accessed March 9, 2017, <http://www.romania-insider.com/romanias-defense-minister-confirms-defense-spending-increase/>.

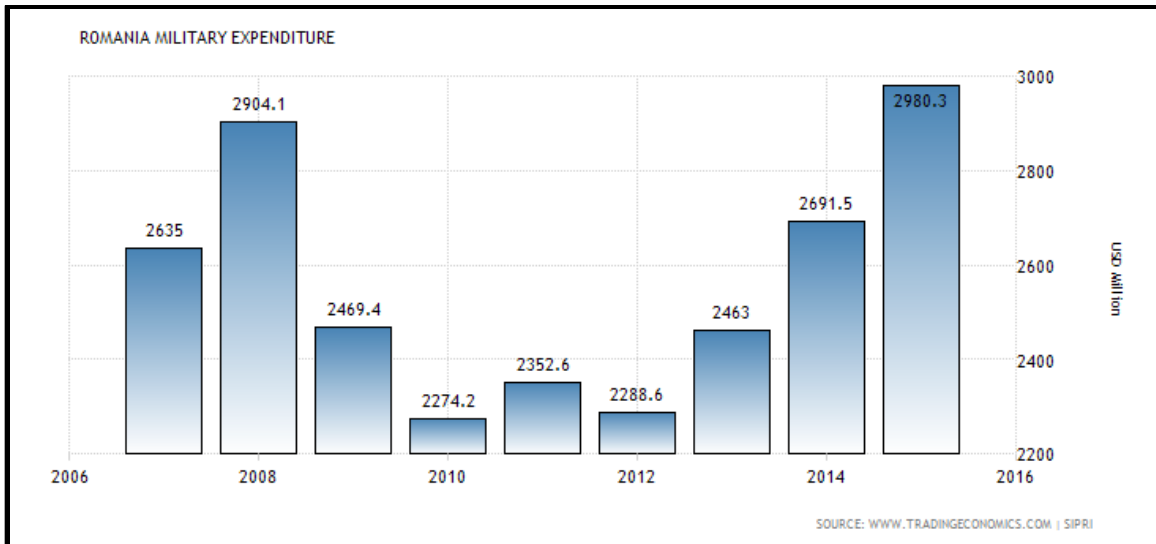


Figure 3. Romanian defense expenditures

Source: Trading Economics, “Romanian Military Expenditure,” accessed March 9, 2017, <http://www.tradingeconomics.com/romania/military-expenditure>.

The new allocation will result in acceleration of the army transformation process, personnel training development, continuation of the existing major acquisition programs and even initiate new ones.

The Romanian military has a timeline to finish the equipment and procedures modernization by 2027, while also becoming a fully capable force, flexible and highly efficient organization. Regardless the different budget constraints over the years, the Romanian Army maintains the training standards of its troops with an emphasis on the high readiness level of NATO allocated forces. In 2015 alone, the Romanian armed forces participated in more than 400 exercises from which 112 were bilateral or multinational. The same training pace was maintained in 2016 as well. Romania included multiple multinational exercises in the NATO program of exercises, as part of the Readiness Action Plan. Some of them were connected through virtual and constructive

simulated training to similar exercises conducted in other training areas in the region.²⁸⁰

From this perspective, Romania will continue to be a reliable NATO member, fully committed to the deterrence mission and contributing to the strong signal sent to Russia by the allied forces.

Moreover, in the new financial allocation context, defense investments will play a significant role. Romania already engaged in several modernization programs over recent years and the new budget will allow it to continue, accelerate and even start new programs. The Romanian Air Forces will continue to develop the F-16 Multirole Aircraft Program. The Romanian Army will continue the prospects to renew fixed and mobile communications and information systems, procurement and modernization of armored combat vehicles and multifunctional transport platforms. For the Romanian Naval Forces, the government announced the intention to purchase four new corvettes for the Romanian Black Sea Fleet and to modernize the frigates T-22 R–stage 2 to full operational capacity along with other Navy equipment.²⁸¹

To sum up, the effects of the application of the Russian DIME on the Romanian security policies are significant, causing the emergence of new security concepts and reorganizing the defense and security community. Internally, it emphasized the critical importance of fighting corruption and protecting the freedom of justice and democratic

²⁸⁰ Balkan Defense, “Romania ups defense budget,” accessed March 9, 2017, <http://www.balkandefense.com/romania-ups-defense-budget-lists-priorities-for-2016/>.

²⁸¹ Andrei Luca Popescu, “România cumpără 4 corvete noi, pe care Olanda le va fabrica la Galați. Cât costă navele și de ce are România nevoie de ele,” *Gandul*, accessed March 9, 2017, <http://www.gandul.info/stiri/romania-cumpara-4-corvete-noi-pe-care-olanda-le-va-fabrica-la-galati-cat-costa-navele-si-de-ce-are-romania-nevoie-de-ele-15905826>.

values. Externally, it warned the Romanian authorities about the danger of the Eastern vicinity instability, the need to protect Romania's citizens in neighboring countries and it determined Bucharest's leaders to consolidate the pace of the Romanian military development, mainly the training and the equipment acquisition processes.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusions

The continuous changes in the Eastern and Central Europe operational environment have a great influence on the Romanian security context. Topping the complexity of the unpredictable Turkish situation and the outcome of the Middle East and North African conflicts generating uncontrollable migration, are Russian Federation interests and actions in Kaliningrad, Ukraine and in the Black Sea area that raised many challenges for the Romanian decision makers.

This study tried to decipher the security problem, analyzing how the new aroused conflict influenced the regional economic, political and military balance, and the repercussions that affect Romania. It used the major recent events conducted from Kremlin and the new Russian international approach as the main vehicles to examine the trends of the Russian policies and strategies development process and to identify the best methods to deter or diminish the Russian destabilizing influence.

In this context, the tensions between the West and Moscow, known as The New Cold War, generated the primary research question of this thesis, to identify the current Russian strategy to influence Romania, a NATO member state, a country part of the EU state and a US strategic partner.

For many Romanian analysts, being part of such important alliances and having strong partners should have been enough to maintain Romania in a safe zone. At the same time, the Russian Federation developed a strategy to challenge the US world hegemonic position by questioning international rules and legislation through diplomatic ways,

influencing the surrounding countries or the Western nations' political decisions and populations through informational means and avoiding direct, conventional military confrontation. Therefore, young and still vulnerable democracies represent significant opportunities for the Russian leadership to create unrest and instability, challenging the nation itself and the organization that is part of, simultaneously. For that reason, Romania along with many other states in the region are the main targets of the Russian Federation's actions, with different levels of intensity in accordance with the political given conditions at a certain time.

To support the primary research question, the study used secondary research questions to explore the current security environment, the policies and the relationships between the major actors and their interaction. The thesis encompassed detailed analysis about the Russian political, economic and military relevance to the operational environment, to understand completely the place of the Russian Federation on the international order and to determine if Russia stands today as a regional or global major power. The Russian Ends, Ways and Means of the foreign affairs policies employed to accomplish its strategic objectives were very important to display the mechanisms and the patterns Kremlin uses to shape the political and social environment and to achieve the desired end-states in relation with other states. To continue, the study shifted its focus from the general Russian foreign affairs approach on the international stage to the particular case of Romania, investigating the intensity of the Russian instruments of national power employment over Romania. In the end, it was very important for the relevance of the study to investigate the impact of the Russian influence on the Romanian security policies and the Romanian responses to these challenges.

To enable the study development, the thesis used the qualitative research methodology, combining recent historical research with pattern analysis based on in-depth descriptions of current security environment, political decisions and processes, and state interactions and social phenomena. The most common methods used within the chosen methodology were document analysis, content analysis, texts interpretation, cognitive mapping and limited quantitative data interpretations.

At the beginning of the study, the framework used to evaluate the today's status of the Russian Federation on the international background was the examination of the political, economic and especially the military situation, by applying the DOTMLPF in-depth analysis.

Furthermore, the Russian Foreign Affairs policies consideration was conducted using Ends-Ways-Means framework, to emphasize the correlations between the political objectives established by the Kremlin's leaders, the tools they can access to shape the international environment and paths they choose to follow in the process.

The next step was to narrow the focus from the Russian Foreign Affairs international approach to the Russian influence in Romania, analyzing the existence, the forms and the intensity of each of the instruments of national power, the DIME. The last step of the analysis explored the changes generated by the Russian actions to the Romanian security strategies, used an Ends-Ways-Risks correlation between the Romanian security strategic objectives and lines of effort stated in the December 2015 National Security Strategy and the risks raised by the actions generated beyond the Eastern border.

As a result of the amount of data analyzed, the studied situations, the interpretations of the current strategic paradigm, the decision-making processes and the security policies adopted in Romania, Russia, regionally and globally, there are certain conclusions to be drawn.

In the last 15 to 25 years, the Romanian society became, somehow, insensitive to the Russian cultural values and its influences. The insignificant Russian minority makes the cultural influence relatively ineffective. However, this does not mean it is immune to any kind of Russian influence, since its arsenal is quite diverse. Bottom line, today's employment of Russian instruments of national power in Romania transformed the general DIME into a more moderate version, that highlight diplomatic-political and informational components.

The most preferred diplomatic topic of the Russian officials is, by far, the Ballistic Missile Defense System. Deveselu military base turned into a key element of the Russian propaganda used to spread disinformation about its offensive capabilities throughout the Russian audience and to create unrest within the Romanian population. The Kremlin is using this theme to gain support of the international public opinion by portraying the West as breaking the international treaties, describing the Russian authorities as victims of those reckless actions and demonstrate how Romania became an innocent target of the Russian missiles, caught in the middle of an unfamiliar dispute. This rhetoric will continue to develop, as NATO will consolidate its presence along the Eastern flank.

Militarily, the overall influence on NATO (viewed as the US and its Western allies) transfers to the Romanian Armed Forces as well. Military expenditures have

increased and became a national security priority. Military equipment acquisition programs rhythm accelerated and their objects diversified. Training events increased in numbers and grew in complexity.

Economically, although Romania has a certain energy independence, the Russian investments are occupying the third place. It is not a crucial level, but is still important, if not considering the EU member states investments. The energy diplomacy promoted by the Russian authorities in the region does not affect Romania, due to its own internal resources but there are some imports from Russia of natural gas and petroleum, especially in the wintertime. There are Russian initiatives to expand collaboration in several economic domains but the main priority in Bucharest is to build bridges with the Western societies and accelerate the integration in the EU. Besides this political orientation, the population negative perception of the Russian policies is an obstacle difficult to overcome.

To sum up and answer the primary research question, there is a Russian strategy to influence Romania as part of a broader plan to influence the entire region in accordance with its own interests. An authoritarian control of the internal political situation, doubled by a firm regional dominance will ultimately enable Russia to achieve its ambition to obtain universal recognition as a major world power with an important role on the international order paradigm. Therefore, it employed a systematic approach to impose its will in the former Soviet region, in the European environment and finally in the international affairs.

Russia wants to consolidate its sphere of influence in the region by dominating the near abroad territory, blocking the EU and NATO enlargement process, maintaining

and creating new frozen conflicts within its proximity to establish a buffer zone with the West. To this end, Russia using informational and diplomatic campaigns to spread the Russian narrative among the Romanian population, targeting the younger generation as well as the older communist nostalgic, but with limited results due to historical and cultural differences.

Following the historical intentions and footsteps of Peter the Great Czar, another main objective is to reassert Russia as an important European player, involved in the major European decisions. To this end, the Kremlin is using diplomacy and information tools to influence political decisions in both younger Eastern democracies and in the Western societies. Praising the Brexit, meddling the Turkish turmoil, encouraging the Eurosceptic parties in countries to held future elections, promoting bilateral agreements with different EU members are part of this strategy. In Romania, a young democracy with internal political and social struggles, Russia is using strong informational methods to criticize the European and the American policies, emphasize corruption, support the anti-corruption movements, and spread the Russian propaganda presenting Russia as the only viable alternative to the savage Western-style capitalism.

Furthermore, Russia aims to reemerge as an international power, emphasizing its military power and challenging the major world players by continuing its militarization process in the Arctic zone, creating an Anti-Access Area Denial (A2AD) zone from Kaliningrad enclave to Crimea and parts of the Middle East and through military intervention in Ukraine, Syria or possibly Libya. In Romania, Russia is conducting reduced Information operations to frighten the population regarding the security risks raised by NATO equipment and troop's presence.

Because of these threats, the December 2015 Romanian Security Strategy encompassed new concepts to define and address new threatening actions displayed in Crimea or Eastern Ukraine. This strategy acknowledged new hybrid and asymmetric forms of warfare comprised of mixed methods between military operations, criminal activities, severe propaganda, social media interference and cyberattacks. Moreover, the new strategy identified the risks, main directions and the lines of effort for the security and defense institutions to follow. Most of the new strategy objectives identifies the “actions from the Eastern proximity” as the main security risks. Therefore, the only viable solution for Romania to counter the Russian influence is to continue its European integration process, reaffirm its fundamental role in maintaining the regional stability by consolidating its security means, and become a reliable actor for the EU, NATO and within its strategic partnership with the US. Accelerated integration process into the western organizations and security cooperation with regional and international partners will enable Romania to protect its interests, its sovereignty, its borders and critical infrastructure and the rule of law and democratic values. To protect the rule of law, freedom of justice, human rights, to fight corruption, to improve business environment, Romania must counter efficiently the Information operations conducted from its Eastern proximity.

The frozen conflicts and inter-ethnic tensions in the Romanian vicinity is adding pressure to the security environment. Predicting and countering disturbances on the energy markets are very important to ensure Romania’s energy security. These are the most important factors considered by Romanian authorities to respond successfully to the Russian strategy of weakening the state and its institutions, diminishing population’s trust

in the European and American partnerships, spread the corruption and the Russian narrative through massive propaganda.

Recommendations

This analysis and its conclusions generates a wide range of recommendations, starting with a necessary increase of the means and ways of using soft power methods to counterbalance the Russian diplomatic and informational offensive and ending with enhanced military cooperation and economic consolidation. Building a strong and active civil society is also vital. Free press and media are condition for a mature democratic society. A political and economic environment, free of corruption and sustained by powerful democratic institution can lay down the path to prosperity for the Romanians. Education is probably the most important weapon against manipulation and ignorance.

From an academic point of view, the research perspective opened by this thesis is not only complex but also crucial to the Romanian security problem. Future studies can concentrate on different topics using this work as a reference and a starting point. There can be examinations of the Romanian available means to counter the Russian influence on the society, the political entities, the military or the economic actors to identify the necessary future investments in security. Other studies can focus on the relationships between Romania and Russia, in the Black Sea Region context and challenges. The Russian influence on the Romanian security industry and the process of transition towards Western military “products” is also a valid research subject. The BMD system and the “first strike” nuclear strategy could be an interesting research opportunity to counterbalance the Russian narrative and myths about the capacity and the role of this system in the NATO and Romanian defense architecture.

This topic raised another important aspect for the Romanian security domain audience about the necessity of creating a Eurasian Security Research Center or a similar institution in Romania academic environment, dedicated to evaluate continuously this complex theater, rich in resources, culture and traditions, but generating so many challenges, tensions and turmoil currently and over the history. This center could be great facilitator for the Romanian leaders to understand better the relationships between different states, societies and systems within Eurasia and make well-informed decisions. After the collapse of the communism in 1989, the Romania society broke the majority of the connections with the Russian Federation culture and values. However, if the Romanian elites will follow the trend, it will be a significant mistake. Knowledge is power and knowing the risks and influences around will help the leaders to act coherently and efficiently.

Finally yet importantly, this thesis could be a reflection point for the Romanian audience and not only, about the vulnerabilities of a relatively small nation placed in a complex geostrategic environment, a young democracy with young democratic institution that inherited difficult challenges, but determined to prevail and to return into its European family.

GLOSSARY

Salami-slicing strategy. The slow accumulation of small actions, none of which is a *casus belli*, but which add up over time to a major strategic change.

DOTMLPF. Framework to analyze capabilities within the “domains” of doctrine, organization, training, materiel, leadership and education, personnel, and facilities. DOTMLPF is a joint term and analysis methodology that originated in the Army. Also used to manage the process of change, which “requires the continual adaptation and development of both materiel and non-materiel solutions across the Army’s doctrine, organization, training, materiel, leadership and education, personnel, facilities, and policy (DOTMLPF-P) domains.”

Organization for Black Sea Economic Cooperation (BSEC). This is a regional international organization to foster multilateral political and economic initiatives regarding cooperation, peace and stability in the Black Sea region. It was initiated at 25 June 1992, in Istanbul by the "Bosphorus Statement" Summit Declaration, signed by Albania, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bulgaria, Georgia, Greece, Moldova, Romania, Russia, Turkey and Ukraine. Later members: Serbia (2004). Turkey vetoed Cyprus application and Greece vetoed Macedonia application.

BlackSeaFor. The Black Sea Naval Force (also known as the Black Sea Naval Cooperation Task Group) is a Turkish initiative materialized into a naval cooperation program established in 2001 with the participation of Black Sea region countries: Bulgaria, Romania, Ukraine, Russia and Georgia.

The Montreux Convention. It is an agreement regarding the regime of the straits established in 1936 that gives Turkey control over the Bosphorus and the Dardanelles, regulates the transit of naval warships, guarantees the free passage of civilian vessels in peacetime and restricts the passage of naval ships not belonging to Black Sea states.

Operation Atlantic Resolve. Atlantic Resolve is a U.S. military commitment to collective security through a series of actions designed to reassure NATO allies and partners of America's dedication to enduring peace and stability in the region in light of the Russian intervention in Ukraine.²⁸²

European Reinsurance Initiative. It is an US initiative that begun in 2014 as a consequence of the Russian revanchist attitude and its aggressions in Ukraine, to reassure its allies that the United States remains committed to maintain the peace and stability in Europe.

²⁸² U.S. Army Europe, “Operation Atlantic Resolve,” accessed March 5, 2017, <http://www.eur.army.mil/AtlanticResolve/>.

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